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[A STRICKEN HEART.]

WHY SHE FORSOOK HIM;

OR,

THE SECRET OF HER BIRTH.

By the Author of "Basil Rivington's Romance,"

"That Young Person, etc."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SACRIFICE.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, the sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze.

"Why do you make me speak plainly?" asked Mr. Elton, reproachfully. "I had made up my mind to tell you all, Miss Darnley, and now each word I utter seems an insult."

"Speak openly, I would rather know all," said Madeline.

"The day he married you Gerald would, in a measure, lose his position. He could give you his name and raise you to his rank; but he could not stop the hundred idle tongues that would be busy with your origin. All is mystery, but their invention would supply the history of your family and parentage; and those who were jealous of your beauty could revenge themselves by reports, while Gerald would be powerless to stop a single rumour, since he could never know that it is false."

"And would people be so cruel?"

"Aye, child," he said, pityingly, "you know little of the world, or you would not need to ask. You might live down the tales founded by malice and envy. I do not say you would not; but it would take long years, and during the best part of your lives, Gerald would suffer the pain it is to

any sensitively honourable man to see the world busy with his private history, and you would suffer too, for having brought him such a trial."

"Is that all?" asked the girl, with a strange calmness, which her companion misunderstood.

"Is it not enough? No, there is another thing which I would have spared you, had you not asked me for it. A day may come when you will blush to be unable to tell your boys who was their grandfather, and when honourable men refuse to marry your daughters because of the doubts of their mother's parentage."

A long silence followed.

He was watching the effect of his words.

She was nursing herself for a last effort. "Tell your nephew," she said in a trembling voice, "that I give him back his word, and that—I hope he may be happy."

It was too much, her courage broke down, and she buried her face in her hands, weeping bitterly.

She had been joyous for three days, and now at one blow her joy went from her.

"Why do you wait?" she asked, when she saw through her tears that he still kept his seat. "I can do no more."

"Gerald will only receive his freedom from yourself."

"I cannot see him!" she moaned; "I cannot bear it. Have you no pity for me?"

"I do not ask you to see him."

"Speak plainly," she said, wearily. "I do not understand you."

"Miss Darnley," said Richard Elton, firmly, "you know that Gerald will never accept your sacrifice while he believes it to be such. You have acted nobly, but for your generosity to avail you must finish your renunciation."

She looked up at him with her blue eyes.

"Ah! how pitiful was their dumb inquiry!"

"He must think that it is for your own sake you release him from his engagement."

"For myself! I, who love him more than life! I must break my faith and let him think me false."

"It is the only way. Did he think you had yielded to my entreaties he would be here to-morrow at your feet. He would regard himself as still bound to you in love and honour."

"Is it not enough that you separate us? What do you want more? That he thinks me worthless, false, perfidious—that I have never loved him?"

"Yes."

"It is too much;" she cried. "I cannot do it."

"Not for his sake!"

"Then promise me one thing. Remember all I am giving up. Grant me one request, and I will do all your will."

"Name it."

"Some day, when I am dead, or when he has married some one else whom he loves, then tell him it was for him I did it. Don't let him think hardly of me always—tell him the truth some day."

"By the memory of my youth, of my early love, I swear it to you!" answered the old man, solemnly.

"Ah, you have loved yourself! Then you will be true to me!"

She put one hand to her throbbing head, and looking up said:

"Now tell me what you want me to do. It is finished now. I am but an instrument in your hands, but it is for Gerald's sake, and he will know the truth some day."

"To-morrow you will receive a letter from Gerald. He will tell you that he finds himself unable to sell out of the army, that I have withdrawn his allowance, and for a little time you must both live modestly. He will beg you to answer him at once. You will not do so."

She bowed her poor tired head in token of assent.

"He will write again, and you will leave his letter again unanswered. He will then come here, and you must anticipate him and begone."

He hesitated.

He knew nothing of her resources. She was probably poor, but he could not bring himself to offer her money, it would have been an insult.

"You have my promise," said Madeline. "Keep yours as truly as I shall keep mine."

He saw that she expected him to go, and he rose.

He was thankful the interview was over.

He had gained his end, and yet he was not satisfied.

He felt like a thief or a robber before this girl, from whose beautiful unselfishness he took all—to whom he gave nothing.

He longed to implore her pardon, much as an executioner asks forgiveness of his victim.

"You have my life-long gratitude, Miss Darnley. I shall always respect and honour you truly. If ever you should need a friend, it would make me happy to serve you."

"You can do nothing for me," she returned, proudly. "Fatherless, motherless, alone in the world, I have but one thing left to wish for, the friend of the unfortunate—Death!"

"Surely not at your age—with your beauty?"

"It is because I am young that I wish for it! Young and alone, what is the use of my beauty? It has given me one noble heart I cannot keep. But yet I bless it. It gave me his love, and I have been happy three days!"

Mr. Elton put out his hand.

"Good-bye, forgive me, if you can, for thinking too much of Gerald's happiness, and too little of yours. I regret, from my heart, the pain I have caused you!"

She did not seem to see his hand.

"Remember your promise, sir," she said, simply, and then he left her alone with her misery.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW HE BORE IT.

CLARE ASHLEY, too anxious to settle to anything, waited eagerly in the dining-room all through the long hour that Mr. Elton was with Madeline.

At last she heard his footsteps, and from the window she saw him walk slowly down the garden path.

A minute later, and she had entered the room he had just left.

Madeline sat motionless in calm despair. Her face was pale as marble, but her eyes were dry and fearless, and glittered with a feverish brilliancy. She moved not, spoke not; she seemed stunned by the blow.

Clare called on her by every tender name, but no answer came.

Then she drew the weary head to rest on her shoulder, and softly spoke one word:

"Gerald!"

That name was the key which unlocked the overcharged heart.

Madeline told all.

Her assumed calm gave way; she sobbed out the story, and then lay like a tired child, her head still resting on Clare, and one of her hands tightly held in hers.

"It is a cruel sacrifice."

"It was right, Clare. I should have brought him too much sorrow. It is not that which is the worst to bear. It is that he should think me false."

Clare attempted no consolation. She wished vainly that Gerald had never crossed her threshold.

She sat on, motionless and silent as the girl who leaned on her, till Madeline suddenly rose, freed herself from her embrace, and left the room. A moment later Mr. Ashley came in.

She had heard his footsteps and withdrawn herself.

Her grief was too keen, too fresh, to bear his pity then.

"It is better so," said Charles, when his wife had told him all, "unjust, cruel, though it seems towards her now, it is saving her from a worse sorrow in the future. Poor Madeline! could I have foreseen this, I never would have brought him here."

"Where can she go, Charles?" asked his wife, reverting to another difficulty. "When he finds his letters unanswered, he will surely come here. She must not see him. She could never bear it."

"She had better go and stay with my sister. There she will be safe from all fresh trouble. Alice will be very kind to her. You know, she has daughters of her own."

"She is not rich, Charles. Will not Madeline be an additional charge to her?"

"I will take care of that. Alice has often talked of receiving a young lady as a boarder, and she would prefer Madeline to all others. Believe me, Clare, it is the best plan. She will be better there, poor girl, than here, where everything recalls his presence."

"Charles, you don't mind that I care so much for

Madeline. I cannot help loving her dearly; she is so lonely and so miserable."

"Charles," said the rector, fondly, "we are so happy ourselves that it would be cruel to refuse a share of our hearts to this desolate girl. Rest assured I shall never grudge your love for Madeline, nor cease to regard her as a friend. For some weeks, perhaps even for some months, it is best that she should leave us. But our home is always hers, and after their own mother, there is no one on earth I would so gladly see my children resemble."

"Will you write to Alice?"

"No, there might not be time for a reply. Madeline had better go on Monday. Yorke can hardly get here before that."

"But if your sister should not be at home? Madeline does not know your brother-in-law; what would she do all alone?"

"She will not be alone, Clare. If you can spare me, I shall take her."

"Charles, how good you are. You think of everything!"

"But if I do my part in taking Madeline, can you do yours here?"

"What is it?"

"Can you see Gerald? Can you bear with him? Remember, for Madeline's sacrifice to avail, he must believe her all that is false. He will think himself cruelly injured. Can you be brave and patient? Remember, too, my wife, he will have the right to be very bitter towards Madeline!"

"Would you not be more comfort to him—you his old friend?" asked Clare, wistfully.

"You shall go with Madeline, and I will stay here, if you wish it, dear; only I think for all our sakes, the first plan is best."

"Why, Charles?"

"Because at such a moment, all our intimacy—our long friendship, will be powerless with Yorke. He is so proud and stern, so honourable and just, his anger will be terrible. With you he will restrain himself, and hide his grief—from me he could conceal nothing. And, Clare, I think you know I never kept a secret in my life, it may be very weak, but I think if I saw him suffer I should tell him all!"

"I will stay, Charles."

"Be patient with him, Clare; he knows nothing of his uncle's visit. To all appearances he has been cruelly deceived."

"I will do all I can."

Madeline heard the plans for her departure with a dumb resignation that went to Clare's heart. The girl seemed dead to all emotion—to feel neither joy nor grief—and yet through all she saw her friends' tender care—knew and appreciated the kindness that made the rector leave his wife and children, to prevent her going alone, as it were, into a strange world.

She thanked the Ashleys. She tried to seem pleased at the meeting with Mrs. Graham, whom she knew and liked.

But Madeline was no hand at deception, and her pleasure was a poor pretence.

"You will come back to us, darling?" said Clare, when Miss Darnley's luggage stood in the little hall, and all was ready for her departure. "Remember you belong to us. We only spare you to Alice for a little while, then you must come home!"

"Clare," whispered Madeline, "will you write to me?"

"Of course I will," returned the other readily, without a thought of the double round of daily tasks Madeline's absence would impose on her.

"You will see him,"—she could not speak his name—"Tell me how he bears it!"

They were her last words in the house. Clare followed her to the gate, saw her get into the waiting carriage, kissed her once again, and then, after bidding farewell to her husband, returned slowly to the house, oppressed by the blank the two departures made, and above all, by the consciousness that Madeline had carried away Gerald's second letter, and he himself must soon arrive.

Mr. Ashley, by his wife's own generous persuasions, would not return till Saturday, and in spite of her loneliness, felt glad there was no chance of his seeing Gerald.

She was a brave woman.

She had promised to see Captain Yorke, and she would keep her word.

It was best that she should bear the first brunt of his anger.

It would have been another grief for her if poor Madeline had been the cause of any ill will between Charles and his boyhood's friend.

Days passed, and Mrs. Ashley began to hope Gerald had taken Madeline's silence as conclusive, and spared them both the pain of an interview. She was mistaken.

On the Thursday after her husband's departure, as she stood in the garden with her little daughter, a pretty child of nearly three years old, by her side, the servant came to tell her that Captain Yorke wished to see her.

"Did he ask for me or your master?"

"For the ladies, ma'am."

Clare kissed her child, as though the touch of those innocent lips would give her strength for the trial before her, then she went slowly to the house, a very different woman from the blithe, happy-looking hostess who had first welcomed Gerald to the rectory.

He was sitting in the drawing-room, his eyes fixed eagerly on the door, expectation on his every feature.

He could not conceal his disappointment when Clare entered alone, and as she looked at him, she first realised that he too would suffer cruelly from the sacrifice exacted by his uncle.

She could find no word of greeting; she gave him her hand in absolute silence.

"What is the matter?" he cried, frightened by her pale face. "Is Madeline ill or Charles?"

"Charles is very well. He is not at home."

"But Madeline?"

"She is well."

"Tell me all!" he said, quickly. "I know that something is wrong, and your face tells me with dread. Mrs. Ashley, have pity on me; do not keep me in suspense!"

"Madeline is not here!"

"Not here! She must have expected me. She has left my letters unanswered, and I told her if she did not write, I should come! What does it mean?" he continued, seeing her still silent. "Oh, you mean it kindly, but you are torturing me!"

"Captain Yorke," said Clare Ashley, her heart full of a vast pity, and a great lump rising in her throat. "Forgive my husband and forgive me, that we brought you here!"

She could not accuse Madeline, and yet she felt how deep a wrong had been done him, so generously she tried to take the blame, or at least a portion of it, on herself.

"Do you mean that she has gone away without word or sign, knowing I was coming?"

Clare bowed her head.

"Do you know what that proves?" he asked, wildly. "That she is false to me; that she accepted me for my wealth, my future title. My uncle has stopped my allowance. I am a poorer man than she thought for, and so she has gone!"

He walked impatiently up and down the room. It was a fearful blow.

He had loved her from the depths of his great heart, yet no thought came to him of praying her to change her decision.

Gerald valued truth above all things, and Madeline had deceived him.

"She is false!" he cried, stopping his walk suddenly in front of Clare, and almost staggering against the wall for support. "She was fooling me all the time! What an idiot I was—I who had lived twenty-nine years without a woman's love to believe in a tearful face and pair of blue eyes. I wonder you don't laugh at my credulity, Mrs. Ashley!"

"Captain Yorke," said the young wife, timidly taking his burning hand in her cool ones, "I never laughed at real feeling in my life. I believed as firmly as yourself that Madeline loved you truly; if I have been mistaken—if any want of thought of mine has helped to bring this trouble on you—oh, forgive me!"

"It is not your fault," he said, more calmly. "She has deceived you as she has deceived me! She seemed so pure and true, who would not have believed in her? Why does Heaven give such beauty to women whose hearts are so false? I would have braved all, sacrificed all for her, and she has betrayed me for the sake of money—miserable money! "Don't look so frightened!" he went on, seeing she made no attempt to answer him. "Don't look as though you thought I was going mad or out of my senses! I am quite calm, if she were here before me now, I could meet her face to face! Hearts don't break now-a-days; she has spoilt my life, that's all!"

Clare longed to comfort him, but bound to secrecy, she could think of nothing to say that did not betray her friend.

"Shall you see her?" asked Gerald abruptly.

"Not for some time—not for months, perhaps."

"What! Has she forsaken you too? Has she duped us both? You who were her best friend, as well as me who trusted her?"

"I can send a message to her for you, Captain Yorke. I promise that I will repeat to her whatever you may wish."

"Tell her," said Gerald bitterly, "that she has wrecked my whole life—my whole future! No,

don't tell her that; it would be a triumph for her! Say that she has destroyed all my faith in women—that I have no faith in beauty or goodness—that I believe in none, in nothing! I staked all on her, and she has deceived me; and yet I cannot curse her, something holds me back! I despise her for her perfidy, for the art that cloaked it beneath such seeming truth, and I hate myself because the old love I had for her prevents my cursing her! And because I am such a poor weak idiot, I regret my uncle stopped my allowance, otherwise I should have stayed on in my dream of bliss—should have believed in her still! I would have rather gone on being her dupe, than feel as I feel now!"

"This is fearful," said Clare.

"And what would you have me say?" he answered impatiently. "That I forgive her would be a falsehood! I don't forgive her! I am no saint—no model of patience and virtue. I may forgive her some day, but it will be when I am old, and my memory fails me! She might have made of me what she would—she has made me doubt everything—almost that there is a Heaven above! You must not reproach yourself; it is not your fault, "he said more gently; "for Clare had buried her face in her hands, and was crying bitterly.

"I can't help it," she sobbed. "If Madeline has spoilt your life, surely it is our fault that you two were thrown together? Did you not meet her here?"

"You are not to blame," he rejoined, firmly. "Your husband warned me, and as for you—" his strong voice quivered like a child's—"you judged her by yourself. You are a true woman, the joy and crown of your husband's life. If she had taken pattern by you, my fate might have been different!"

"Captain Yorke," said Clare, earnestly, "my husband is your oldest friend. No one can be more your well-wisher than I. For the sake of that friendship he bears you, grant me one boon!"

"You know," he answered, simply, "there is nothing I would not do for you." "Then don't let her falsehood wreck your life. You are too good and brave to die for the love of any woman. You have your name to honour, your country to defend, and Heaven to serve. Bear up bravely, and live for the future!"

"The future has nothing for me."

"It may have much. As you act now, so will you be rewarded then. My husband says you are the soul of truth and justice. The world has need of men like you. Don't sink into an aimless, disappointed sceptic. Live and work for others, if not for yourself."

"I will try," he said, moved by her earnestness.

"And am I to give your message? I will repeat it to her word for word, if you so will; but in after time you may be sorry."

"No," he said, after a pause, "don't give it. Every word of it is true, but every word is unworthy of me, and of what I thought she was; it would pain you more in the giving, than in the receiving. I send no message to her. Henceforward my one desire is to forget that I have ever known her!"

"What shall I tell Charles?"

"That I never prized his friendship more than I prize it now; that all this changes nothing between us, and although it may be years before I meet him again, I shall be the same. For you, you have borne with me patiently, you have listened to me very generously, you have saved me from myself. Heaven bless you, and keep you ever as you are now!"

He broke off suddenly, and moved towards the door.

She followed him.

She could not have borne that hired hands should open for him the gate, through which, perhaps, he never might pass again.

Her little girl, still playing in the garden, came trotting up to meet them.

Fear was an unknown power in that village rector.

Captain Yorke took the little maid in his arms. He was fond of all children, and this one had been a special favourite of his.

He kissed her once or twice, then put her hastily down, thinking doubtlessly of the person at whose side he had first seen her.

"Poor baby! what a pity she must get to be a woman," he muttered.

Clare would not seem to hear him.

They reached the gate. A last handshake and he was gone.

Richard Elton's will was accomplished, for Madeline Darnley and his nephew had broken their engagement, and there seemed little chance of its being renewed.

Poor Gerald!

He had written so hopefully, so truthfully to

Madeline; he had hidden his uncle's refusal so nobly; he had told her his income so frankly, only regretting its smallness for her sake.

Then when no answer came he had written again reproachfully, yet still fondly, confidently saying that if he did not hear from her he should go to Luton.

He had gone, and he found himself forsaken and betrayed.

Richard Elton awaited his nephew anxiously in Belgrave Gardens.

No word on the subject of Luton had been spoken between them, yet he knew perfectly well where Gerald was going, and what news awaited him.

They dined alone that night, and Gerald was gay with a reckless gaiety. He laughed loud and often; he talked more than usual.

The uncle was not deceived. He waited quietly till the explanation came. It was not long in arriving.

Gerald announced his disappointment after a strange fashion.

"You need have no uneasiness for the honour of my name, sir; Miss Darnley refuses to share it with me."

"Refuse?" cried Mr. Elton, with well feigned surprise. "Do you really mean that the young lady has had the generosity to release you from your engagement?"

"The young lady has had the generosity to find my income unworthy of her charms! Uncle,"—the jeering voice changed—"if you have ever cared for me, never mention her name again!"

Mr. Elton strictly obeyed his nephew. He had no wish to speak of the girl whose happiness he had blighted.

No one else in London knew of Gerald's brief engagement; no memory of Madeline was linked with the scenes around him; all seemed favourable for his forgetting her.

He heard no word of her; he never spoke her name, and yet often rose up before his eyes the pleasant rectory garden and the beautiful face of the girl who had deceived him.

He fought hard against the recollection; he strove hard to hate the fair, false woman he had so loved. He led a busy, active life.

He took his full share of the few amusements found in London in autumn.

He lived a whirl of excitement, he tried to drown thought and memory too.

He was changed enough in those few weeks, little as his gay companions noticed it.

Pride prevented his giving way to his disappointment, pride made him hide it from the world. As Clare Ashley had told him, he was too noble a man to die for the love of any woman, but he was not too noble to suffer, and suffering hardened him. His faith in all that was bright and good and beautiful was gone.

If he had been a weak nature he would have done something rash or desperate.

But he was strong, and so he hid his sadness, and endured with calm, but not noble resignation.

He heard once casually of the Ashleys. Mr. Harleigh coming to town on business, spoke of meeting the rector at a dinner-party, but Mr. Harleigh had other and more important news to communicate, so he had not time to speak much of the village clergyman.

Georgina, now strong and well again, was engaged to be married.

Her father announced the event without comment, but Gerald saw he was not delighted. He wondered; the future son-in-law was known to him, and seemed in all respects calculated to make Miss Harleigh happy.

"Oh, it is a good family enough," said the father, confidentially, "but Georgina is an only child, and I had looked higher for her."

He smiled a meaning smile, and Captain Yorke left him, perfectly aware that he himself would have been preferred to young Mr. Bently.

And yet a portionless, almost nameless, girl had deserted him.

Captain Yorke had lost sight of his friend, Lord Thorne.

The young nobleman seemed to have slipped quite out of the fashionable world.

People reported that he was abroad. No one seemed to know where.

Meeting Sir Roland on one of the early December days, Gerald applied to him for information.

"I believe he is in Italy," said the baronet. "He talked of going when he left us."

"What has he been staying with you?"

"Yes, he was at Belleville in September."

Sir Roland stopped so abruptly that his kinsman saw at once that something had rendered the visit no common one.

He concluded the young nobleman had asked for Juliette, and been refused.

"Are you in town for long, Sir Roland?" "Only a fortnight. I am here on business. Lady Yorke and Juliette are at Belleville."

"I thought Lady Yorke disliked the country?"

"In general," said the baronet.

Then, as though it was a relief to him to speak openly:

"Just now she is not at all well, Gerald."

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Oh, dear no," said the other hurriedly. "She is only low spirited—nervous!"

Gerald was astonished at this description of the bright, brilliant Lady Yorke. He expressed his regrets.

"I wish you would spend Christmas with us?" said Sir Roland, suddenly. "I wish we were more intimate. You know it is not my fault we do not know each other better. Nothing would make me happier than to welcome you to Belleville. It will be your own one day."

"Perhaps never. At any rate not for many years, I hope, Sir Roland?" said Ger. M., earnestly. "You are not an old man yet."

"It will be yours some day—it must be!" said the other, simply. "I am quite content. You know, Gerald, I have never grudged you your inheritance as to you!"

The baronet understood the allusion.

"Lady Yorke's last charge to me was to invite you to spend Christmas with us. Will you not come and see the old place that has been the home of your family for so many generations?"

And Gerald, filled with wonder at the sudden change in Lady Yorke's policy, accepted the invitation with the same frankness as Sir Roland proffered it.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARY SMITH carried away Lady Yorke's answer without a suspicion that it contained ten times the sum Mr. Stone had promised to pay her for her services.

She had seen my lady place two papers in the envelope, but her acquaintance with banknotes was far from extensive.

She had, like so many of her class, a greed for gold, and a distrust of paper money.

She was not remarkably scrupulous, and looked out well for her own interest, yet she was not without a certain degree of honesty, and had she known and appreciated the contents of the letter, she would not have robbed the agent, at the moment, when he paid her five pounds, an errand, and a good suit of winter clothes into the bargain.

When she presented herself in Bone Court, Jones, slightly surprised at the change in her attire, ushered her at once into the private room.

Mrs. Smith made no sort of greeting, but holding out the letter, cried, joyfully:

"You'll give me the five sovereigns right down, won't you, sir?"

Mr. Stone gave one glance at the envelope, noted the monogram G. Y., and then opening his purse, counted the promised reward into Mrs. Smith's eager palm.

If ever woman were thoroughly happy, Mary Smith was so at that moment.

Five pounds seemed to her a mine of wealth. She sat down, her eyes still fixed greedily on her treasure.

The agent meanwhile read the hurried lines. The writing told him how the hand had trembled in taking them.

He had no need of Mrs. Smith to know that Lady Yorke believed in the existence of her step-daughter.

"Who did you see?" he asked abruptly.

"The lady, sir, and she wrote that her own self."

"Well?"

"Well, you needn't be afraid, sir; she wants things kept quiet, more than ever you did. She kept getting first red, then white; one minute she'd send me away, the next she called me back. She was just scared!"

"Ah!"

"But you said, sir," continued Mrs. Smith, whose mind reverted to her own affairs, "that you'd help me find my brother."

Mr. Stone had so thoroughly the spirit of his calling, that he delighted to search out a mystery, even without remuneration.

In this case he could repay himself with Lady Yorke's fifty pounds, for in all justice they belonged more to Mary than himself, therefore he answered, almost amiably:

"Ah, yes, to be sure! Tell me all particulars,

and if he's in England we'll find him in a fortnight."

"Law, sir, how very sharp you must be."

The agent smiled at her simple admiration.

"What is his name? How old is he? When did you last see or hear of him? Speak quickly. I am very busy to-day."

"It's more than thirty years, sir, since he went away to seek his fortune in London, and he must have changed a deal in that time. He was a likely enough lad then, and had had more education than the rest of us, so we weren't surprised when we heard he'd been took as porter in a large tally place in London. That was, as I said, sir, thirty years ago, and we ain't heard a sound on him since!"

"You don't help me much, Mrs. Smith. A great many people may be 'likely enough lads,' just describe him."

"He was very tall," said Mrs. Smith, with enthusiasm, "and very thin, his hair was bright red. Folks used to laugh at him in our village. 'Long Corny,' they always called him."

An extraordinary suspicion came to Mr. Stone:

"Is his name Cornelius Jenkins?"

"Yes, sure," cried Mrs. Smith in an ecstasy of expectation. "Do you know him, sir?"

"Very well. I was at his wedding the day before yesterday. You won't be able to see him for more than a week, because he's spending the honeymoon at the seaside."

"It can't be him," said the poor woman, sadly. "He'd be fifty turned; old enough to be a grandfather!"

"It's him, right enough, Mrs. Smith. Mr. Cornelius Jenkins, tallow manufacturer. But he isn't thin any longer."

"And is he pretty well to-do, sir?"

"He's richer than I am, Mrs. Smith. He has his country house, his servants, his gardens."

"Then he's a gentleman," said Mrs. Smith, with amazement.

"Not quite," returned Mr. Stone, gravely, "but he would be if money could make him one."

"And we be starving! It's a crying shame!"

The agent at that moment felt devotedly grateful his daughter had not become Mrs. Jenkins. Nevertheless he was glad to have a chance of annoying the newly wedded pair, and thus avenging the fancied slight to Phyllis.

"If you will stay in London till he comes back, I will make him do something for you."

"But it would cost so much."

"Not if you are careful. Besides I tell you he is sure to give you something."

"Well, I'll stay," said Mrs. Smith, reflectively, "it'll be something to tell the folks of, to see our Corny in a house of his own!"

When she had gone, Mr. Stone took a slip of paper, and began the following calculation:

"Dinner one shilling, cab five ditto, train three ditto. Mrs. Smith's outfit, two pounds, and the five pounds I have just given her, makes seven pounds ten, so I have forty-two pounds ten to send back to Lady Yorke."

He locked the banknote in his desk, drew a cheque for the amount he had named, and was in the act of signing it, when Jones appeared to say a lady was waiting to see him.

"A lady."

"Yes, sir; and a great one, I should say. She came in a cab, but she looks more used to a carriage and pair."

"Show her in," said the agent, quickly.

(To be Continued.)

WOMEN.

On, the priceless value of the love of a true woman! Gold cannot purchase a gem so precious! Titles and honours confer upon the heart no such serene happiness. In our darkest moments, when disappointment and ingratitude, with corroding cares, gather thick around, and even gaunt poverty menaces with his skeleton finger, this love gleams around the soul with an angel's smile.

Time cannot mar its brilliancy, distance cannot weaken its influence, bolts and bars cannot limit its progress; it follows the prisoner into his dark cell, and sweetens the homely morsel that appears on his hunger, and, in the silence of midnight, it plays around his heart, and in his dreams he folds to his bosom the form of her who still loves on, though the world has turned coldly from him.

The couch made by the hands of a loved one is soft to the weary limbs of the sick sufferer, and the potion administered by the same hand, loses half its bitterness. The pillow carefully adjusted by her, brings repose to the fevered brain, and her words of kind encouragement revive the sinking spirit.

It would seem that He, compassionating woman's first great frailty, had planted this jewel in her breast, whose heaven-like interest should cast into forgetfulness man's remembrance of the fall, by building up in his heart another Eden where perennial flowers forever bloom, and crystal waters gush from inexhaustible fountains.

HABITS.—Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake that is added to the pile produces an increase; no single action creates, however it may exhibit a man's character; but as the tempest burls the avalanche down the mountain, and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief, which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

HILL AND SHORE.

Oh, the hills! the hills! I am sick for the hills,

With their warm brown sides so bare,
Their circling arms and their steady feet,
On the shadows slumbering there.

With their reverent hands to the sky up-raised,

As they pray on their carpets green,
Seeking, evermore, what the angels see,
In the Land still to us unseen.

Awhile, this surge of the solemn sea,

And the moan of its deep unrest,
And then, turn, like a home-sick child,
Happy hills, to thy riven breast.

Some gleams of light from the sunset gate,
Bright over the purple sea,
Some charges made on the battered coast,
By its white-horse cavalry.

Some sleepy dreams by its lapping waves,
Some trysts with the stars and sun,
And then, old friends, take me home again,
With my heart from you still unwon.

Oh, grand old hills! that my eye can trust,
With thy changeless outline kept
Since the flat "Light" o'er the now world
Thrilled.

And the sun to its music stepped.

I am glad to think, in thy keeping sure,
I shall rest after work is past;
And the warm brown arms of the patient
mould

Shall be softly round me cast.

Where the friends I love, when a daisy
blooms

Above me, its face shall kiss;
Oh, grasping arms of the sliding sea,
Can your blue waves promise this? E. L.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

GAIETY THEATRE.

THE old French melo-drama of "L'Auberge des Adrets," known to the English playgoers as "Robert Macaire," has assumed a new form at this theatre. The broad-farce character of Jacques Strop has been taken from the piece, and his fun concentrated into a single act of side-splitting drollery for the detection of the myriads of admirers of Mr. J. L. Toole's inexhaustible versatility of humour. Mr. Charles Collette, who has for this special purpose migrated from the "other Gaiety company" at the Opera Comique, plays Robert Macaire with the finished audacity of a most unscrupulous vagabond and the vivacity of a born Frenchman. As to Jacques Strop's drolleries, their immense success at the morning performances has led to the sketch being placed regularly in the bill of fare for the evening's entertainment. We may add that besides Jacques Strop, Mr. J. L. Toole plays also Simmons in "The Spitalfield's Weaver," and Tell in "William Tell Told Again." Years ago the town laughed at Charles Matthew's "in three

pieces," they have now the opportunity of seeing Toole in the like plural singularity, exhibiting in each a facial power irresistibly comic and entertaining.

GLOBE THEATRE.

THE Globe deserves patronage for its revival of the admirable fairy extravaganza of "The Invisible Prince," in which Jennie Lee's Leander deserves unqualified praise. It is preceded by Boucicault's effective drama "Hunted Down." The company, selected by Mr. Edgar Bruce, includes established favourites: Mesdames Rachel Sanger, Louise Willes, Beverley, Vining, Howard, Steele, and Drummond, with Messrs. Geo. Barrett, Beveridge, Edwards, etc., etc.

ROYALTY THEATRE.

THIS pretty little musical box was on Saturday set to a new tune—we mean a new piece—called "Happy Hampstead," the music composed by Mr. Mark Lynne, the book by Mr. Frank Desprez. It is of the class rendered popular by such works as Sullivan's "Trial by Jury," "Box and Cox," and "The Zoo." The Marquis of Kentish-town has met Amanda on the Heath on Whit-Monday—through a newspaper advertisement. It is arranged that he shall meet his *innamorata* in the garb of a policeman, but to test her fidelity the Marquis assumes the disguise of a costermonger. Love, however, though metaphorically and mythologically blind, is practically keen-sighted, and Amanda discovers the real lover, despite his masquerading habiliments. Messrs. Walter Fisher, J. D. Stoyle and Kelcher, with Miss Rose Cullen' did all that good comic acting and clever singing could do for the piece, which, nevertheless, had only a qualified success. Not so the piece de resistance, Offenbach's "Orphée aux Enfers," which for completeness and elan may vie with any performance of that favourite opera yet given in London or any other capital.

At the Gaiety on Wednesday there will be an int resting novelty in the first appearance in comedy of Miss Selina Dolaro. The well-known vocalist of opera-bouffe will essay the arduous character of "Lady Teazle" in the "School for Scandal." Report speaks highly of the actress's hitherto undeveloped talent in a higher walk of the drama. Miss Fanny Josephs, Messrs. Verdin, Collette, Stephens, Lin Rayne, Marius, Wood, and Conway, are included in the cast.

Mr. Henry Irving has been playing Macbeth through five nights of the week at the Lyceum. On Saturday the 20th there was a morning performance of Milman's tragedy of "Fazio," with Miss Bateman as Bianca; and on the previous Saturday the same lady enacted Leah. Richard III, announced (is this sarcastic?) as "Shakspeare's," is promised on January 29.

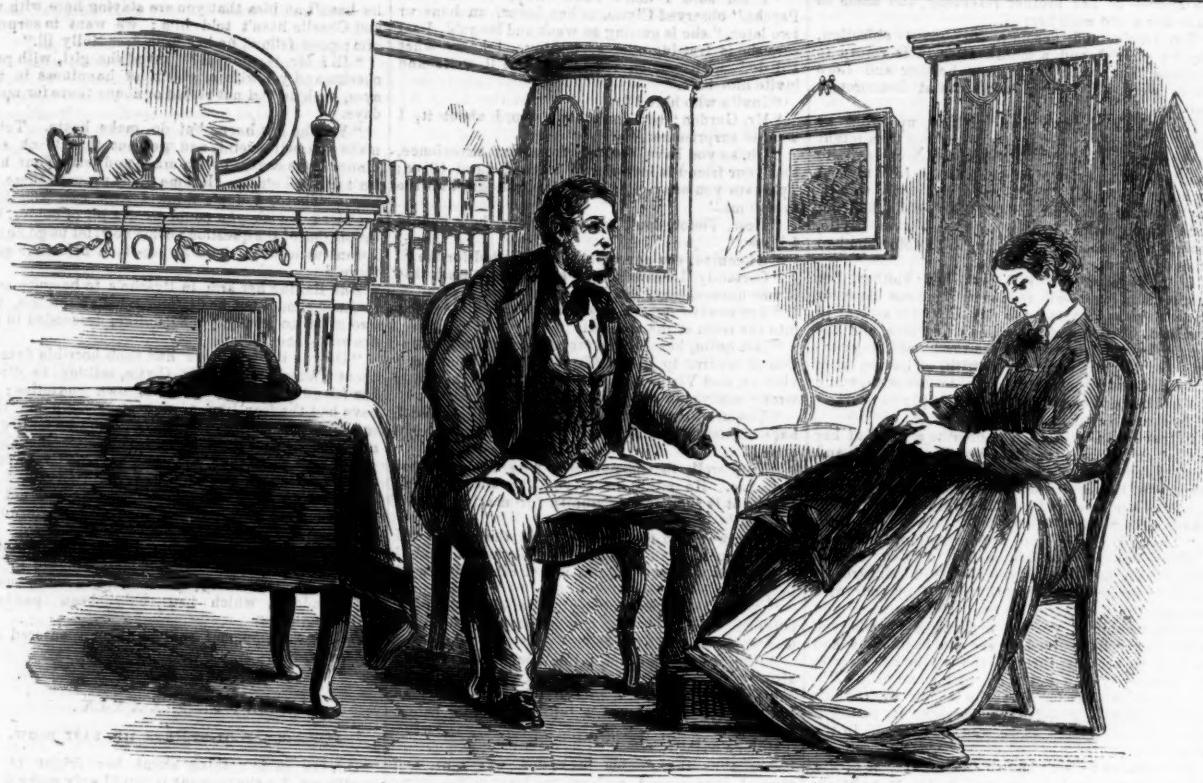
At the Vandueville "Our Boys" are not only "coming of age" but growing to the patriarchal longevity of 650 nights of theatrical existence. Thus far there seems no improbability of their rivaling the Oriental number of the "One Thousand and One Nights' Entertainments." "A Fearful Fog" concludes each evening, which must be our excuse for not seeing father into futurity.

"Robinson Crusoe" at the Folly, with Lydia Thompson in her unique and fashionable goatkin, seems to have lived down the disparaging critiques of the leading or misleading great journals. The public is flocking to the brilliant burlesque, which seems to improve upon acquaintance. Lionel Brough, Willie Edouin, and the powerful company assembled by Mr. Alex. Henderson, must make a *piece go*, if there be any *go* in it.

A curious case has occurred at Liverpool. The directors of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society gave a concert, conducted by Sir Julius Benedict, and Mdlle. Zara Thalberg sang therein "I'm Alone" from Benedict's opera, "The Lily of Kilarny." The song is copyright of certain music-sellers; so the Society has had to pay a fine of 40s. for the composer playing, and the lady singing, the poetical piece.

There will be an interesting sale on the 1st of February. That long tenantless hall of song, the original Italian Opera House, lately Her Majesty's (empty) Theatre in the Haymarket, will be sold under the hammer of the auctioneer.

S. T. P. wishes we would notice the Music Halls. We must decline complying with our correspondent's request, except upon some extraordinary occasion, which we must confess, we do not immediately anticipate. It would also be a serious trespass on our space, large as it is, which we devote to original fiction, literature, and useful miscellanies.



[HOW TOTTS WAS WON.]

CLYTIE CRANBOURNE; —OR— BUILT UPON SAND.

By the Author of "*The Earl's Crime*," "*A Fight for a Peerage*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LORD DENBOROUGH'S GUEST.

"I'm in sad trouble, Totts, for my brother Ben is dead, and he was the only body in the world I had to care for me."

And Jem Curtis, as he said this, hid his face in his hands to hide the traces of his very genuine grief.

"Don't say the only body in the world as cares for you, Jem," replied the little woman, soothingly, "he was a kind good brother, no doubt, but there may be some folks that cares more for you even than he did."

"I don't deserve it, Totts, after all I've done that's bad and good for nothing; but do you care for me, Totts?"

"You know I does, Jem. Haven't I prayed for you every night and morning since you went away? and haven't I looked for you coming back, and felt as certain sure of it as though I read it in the Bible, and ain't you here now, of course you are, for don't I always get what I pray for?"

"Do you think, Totts?" asked the young man, in surprise,

"Of course I does. It mayn't come quite to the time I want it, but it does come, as sure as the sun rises."

"I suppose you never prayed that you and me might get married one day, did you, Totts?" shuffling his seat nearer to her.

But Totts hung her head, got very red in the face, and began to pleat and unpleat her apron, with nervous, restless fingers.

"Because that's what I should have prayed if I'd known how to, when we was on that ship drifting away with precious little grub, and still less hope. I used to lie by the hour together, Totts, and think of

you, and wish I was back sitting with you by the fireside, instead of getting ready to be food for the sharks."

"Did you, Jem?"

It was not much by way of encouragement, but the tone said more than words, and the young man went on:

"Yes, Totts. I didn't seem to know what a dear little thing you was, or how fond I was of you, till I was going to David Jones' looker, and then I says to myself 'Jem, if ever you does get back, you'll ask Totts if she thinks she could make up her mind to marry you, if you go hard to work and turn over a new leaf in life.'"

Did you, Jem?"

The little woman's vocabulary was getting very limited.

"I did, Totts; and now when I've worked for a home to take you to, what will you say, dear?"

"I'll say that I shall be the happiest woman alive," was the answer. "You know that I'm very fond of you, Jem."

A speech which Jem answered with a hearty hug, for there was as much romance and sentiment in the love of these humble people as in that of Lord Clive and the stately Clytie, and Jem was as much impressed with the value of the treasure he had gained, as the young peer could possibly be with his prize.

"There's no need for you to work long for a home, Jem," observed the little woman, after a time, "for I've got a house in a building society, and some money in the savings-bank; and Miss Clytie will get you into some work, or a good situation, she told me so, and so you see, Jem, we shan't have long to wait."

"No, Totts, but I don't deserve it. I've been a very bad fellow; it was me as helped to get Miss Clytie away, and though, after I'd known you, I was ashamed of myself, I'd gone too far to turn back, now don't you hate me?"

"Miss Clytie has forgiven you, so I'm sure I may," and Jem Curtis found, as so many men have done and will do, that a true woman's love covers over and hides, because it refuses to see, a multitude of sins.

Meanwhile, Psyche Clubfoot was by no means as happy as little Totts.

After staying some time in Buenos Ayres with the Bentham's, the whole party had come in the same steamship to London, and during the whole of the

period they were together Gordon had been devotedly attentive to Psyche, even whispering words of love, but without having, as the young lady informed Clytie, proposed.

Trouble and grief met her, the very hour she reached home; for her mother was ill, dangerously ill, and grieving for her son and daughter, both of whom seemed to have deserted her.

For James Clubfoot had not returned home since that morning when he had left it with the intention of murdering Lord Clive, and besides being tried to Denborough Castle, where it will be remembered, he had an interview with Miss Burlington, not a clue of his whereabouts could be found.

Some people thought he had committed suicide by throwing himself in the sea, for the police had traced him to the shore, but, living or dead, he had baffled his pursuers, and when Lord Clive was pronounced out of danger, and began to recover, the search slackened, and it was concluded that he would not again be heard of.

All this was very shocking to Psyche when she heard it.

To have her brother accused of insanity or attempted murder, to know that the shadow of his crime must fall upon herself, clinging to her, perhaps, throughout her existence was terrible, in addition to which her mother's illness, and their necessarily limited resources, were quite enough to worry and perplex her.

In her necessity the Clubfoots had been a friend to Clytie, giving her a home at a merely nominal charge, when she so much needed it, and treating her, not as one under obligation to them, but as an honoured guest.

It was Clytie's turn to be kind and protecting now, and right nobly she performed it.

The best physicians had been called in to attend Mrs. Clubfoot, but their skill was useless, she had caught a severe cold, it had settled on her lungs and chest, worry and excitement had been added to it, and now she is going on her long last journey.

Psyche had, of course, taken her place at her mother's side the moment of her return, and attended her with unflagging care and affection; but it was all in vain, her parent was scarcely conscious when she arrived, and a week after her return to England Psyche was an orphan.

Directly the funeral was over, Clytie insisted that her friends should close up the house, leave all the family affairs in the lawyer's hands for the time, on

the chance of her brother returning, and come to make her home with her.

Too lonely and desolate to make objection, Psyche yielded, and a month after their return to England, she, with Clytie, her brother and Lord Clive, were all feeling at home at Denborough Castle.

Edward Cranbourne had yielded up what he could no longer retain, more gracefully than might have been expected. He had even helped to facilitate the transfer of title and estates from himself to his nephew, till Charlie, who was easily won by any show of generosity, declared that he had not done him justice in the past; and even Clytie, though not so easily blinded, began to think she had misjudged him.

Poor Psyche, she had lost her mother, her brother, and lover—all, as it seemed, at one blow, for since they had parted the day of their arrival in England, Gordon had not called or written, and the poor girl was beginning to have the humiliating sensation of having been played with, of having been simply looked upon as a jolly girl to flirt with, while she had taken the matter far more deeply to heart.

He should never know it, she vowed.

Not even to Clytie did she breathe a word of her anxiety and disappointment, though she pined and fretted, and grew thin and pale, and her deep melancholy made the whiteness of her skin, the bright colour of her hair, and her blue veined transparent hands almost painfully apparent.

"That girl is going into a consumption," observed Charlie, one day to his sister. "You are so wrapped up in Clive that you don't think or care for anybody or anything else, Clytie. If, by your own account, the Clubfoot had neglected you when you were in trouble as you are neglecting Psyche, you would never have lived to see me back again and to walk so proudly through the castle as you do; but prosperity does not agree with some people."

A sneer which brought the colour to Clytie's cheek, and she would have resented it, had not conscience whispered there was some truth in the accusation.

Love makes us very selfish and regardless of the feelings or wants of others, and it was this absorbing passion, not prosperity, which had made Clytie blind to the grief and depression of her friend.

"You are very harsh in your remarks, Charlie," she said, more gently than he expected; "but Psyche has seemed to much prefer being left alone, and, under the circumstances, it appeared so natural that I have allowed her to do as she liked, from an idea that it would make her feel more thoroughly at home."

"She won't want a home anywhere long if she goes pining away like that," was the reply. "She isn't fretting over anything, is she?"

"You know there was her mother's death."

"Yes, but that isn't it."

"Then I think it shocked her greatly, to hear that it was her brother who nearly killed Clive."

"I dare say it did, but she wouldn't pine her life out for that."

"I can think of nothing else, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Have you heard from Mr. Gordon lately?"

"I have thought of that. No, I haven't, he promised to write to me, and he has not done so. I have been so busy, too, that I have not had time to look him up."

"Perhaps he, also, thinks that prosperity does not agree with some people," retorted Clytie, "and that now you are Earl of Denborough, you wish to forget him."

"Nonsense, Gordon is too sensible a fellow for that; we have roughed it so much together, and I have owed my life to him too many times, for him to entertain such an idea."

"You think so," was the incredulous reply, then she added, seeing Psyche listlessly walk across the adjoining room:

"Yes, you are right, Psyche does look ill, I shall send for a doctor for her at once."

But when Psyche heard of her intention, she positively refused to see a medical man, asserting she was quite well, and being pressed to do so, or to try to rouse herself, she burst into tears.

"My dear child, this will never do," said Clytie, soothingly; "a nice bridesmaid you will be for Julia and me, if you fret yourself to a shadow like this; you really must let me send for a doctor; do Psyche, if only to please me."

"It will do no good, I don't want one; I would rather be left alone; pray don't worry me, Clytie, I am not strong enough to bear it." With which contradictory assertion, she wiped her eyes, and tried to smile, though the effort produced but a tearful and wintry result.

"I am sure I don't know what to do about Psyche," observed Clytie, to her lover, an hour or two later, "she is getting so weak and languid, I am sure she is fretting over something. I know what I'll do," with sudden resolution. "I'll write and invite him here."

"Invite who here?"

"Mr. Gordon; but don't say a word about it, I want to surprise her."

"Oh, so you have decided, from past experience, that your friend is love-sick," laughed Lord Clive; "perhaps you are right; of course you know all the symptoms."

"Now, Victor, don't be so ridiculous, how should I know?"

"Of course, you never pined and fretted for me?"

"Certainly, I never did, I knew quite well that it was unnecessary," with a saucy laugh.

"Are you two quarrelling?" asked Charlie, coming into the room at the moment.

"Not quite, but I have just announced my intention of writing to invite Mr. Gordon to come and visit us, and Victor in suspecting me of all kinds of wrong motives in consequence."

"You need not quarrel on that point, then, for I have written to invite him; the letter has already gone."

"Very well, that is no reason why I should not write too. He might resist you, he couldn't me; besides it is such an opportunity for making Victor jealous."

"You won't do that easily," was the reply. "I am too much of an invalid to be neglected, and if you devote all your time to me I can't very well be jealous."

"A very nice way of trying to dissuade me," laughed Clytie. "But you must give me Mr. Gordon's address, Charlie."

"Here it is. Tell him I told you I had written also."

"Yes, and I shall ask him to telegraph the time he will come. But don't talk about him before Psyche."

"Very well."

And thus the double invitation was sent, and several days passed without the least notice being taken of it, when one day, half-an-hour before dinner time, Charlie was informed that a gentleman wished to see him.

It was Gordon, come in his usual abrupt manner, bringing his portmanteau with him.

"How do you do, old fellow; you've got a fine place of it here. I thought you'd forgotten me."

"Forgotten you, indeed, that's the absurd notion Clytie suggested you had taken in your head. I wonder where I should have been at the present moment, but for you. Never wrong me in that way again, Gordon."

"Well, I can't say that I quite believed it, my boy," returned his friend, affectionately; "but the fact is, I've been ill, laid up for some time; I've been looking after an appointment, too, and I've had one or two things to bother me."

"Well, try to forget them now. We are a small party at present; Clive, my sister's intended, is staying with us, but he is little more than an invalid; we shall have Julia and Sir William here in a few days, however."

"Oh, I'm not fond of company; but, Cranbourne—Denborough—I suppose I ought to call you now, what became of that lovely girl, Psyche Clubfoot?"

"What became of her, why she went home, of course."

"So I supposed. She gave me her address. I intended to call or write, but, as I tell you, I was ill, and when I did find the house it was shut up, and I was informed that the family had gone away, and I could get no further tidings of them."

"Oh, I dare say Clytie will be able to help you, but you had better go and dress for dinner, the first bell rang some time ago."

So Gordon was shown to his room, and Charlie went to Clytie's door to inform her of his friend's arrival.

"I am glad you told me first," was the reply. "I must go and see that Psyche is nicely dressed."

Lily was becoming a burden to Psyche Clubfoot, and this evening she felt so weary and languid, that she had just decided to go to bed instead of coming down to dinner, when her friend came into her room.

"What not dressed yet; my dear child! do you intend to send the cook into fits, or make him give warning? pray make haste; here, let my maid help you."

"I don't feel inclined to come down to dinner today, Clytie, if you will excuse me."

"But I won't excuse you. A friend of yours has just arrived, he has been hunting everywhere for you,

has come here to ask me where you are to be found, he hasn't an idea that you are staying here with us, and Charlie hasn't told him; we want to surprise him; poor fellow, he has been dreadfully ill."

"Ill? Mr. Gordon ill?" asked the girl, with pale cheeks, and yet with a gleam of happiness in her eyes, such as had not rested or shone there for many days.

"Yes, he has been, but do make haste. Tots, make yourself useful, and get out that black silk dinner dress covered with craps and jet. Your hair isn't dressed either. Let me pin it up with these jet pins. There, I don't think I ever saw you look prettier; I wish you could wear a bit of colour, but that is out of the question; come now, let us go down. I want us to be in the drawing-room before he gets there."

And linking her arm in Psyche's to be quite sure that she should not hesitate or rebel at the last, the two girls, so lovely, yet so unlike, descended to the drawing-room.

"Do you know, I have had such horrible dreams about Victor lately," said Clytie, talking to divert her friend's thoughts from her own anxieties; "I have had the fear like a nightmare upon me that someone was killing him while I stood by and could not prevent it or save him; isn't it disagreeable?"

"Very, and strange, too, for I have had very painful dreams about you and him. Oh, Clytie, I do hope that my brother is not free, that he will not try to harm you; he must have been mad, or he would never have acted as he did."

"Yes, he must have been; but I had forgotten him. What is that?" she added, springing to her feet with a startled cry, and looking towards one of the windows, which had only been partially fastened.

But at that moment the gentlemen entered the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JAMES CLUBFOOT STRIKES HIS LAST BLOW.

CLYTIE said nothing about her fright to the gentlemen, for she thought it would only make them laugh at her, and she was not certain that anyone had really moved the shutter, or that it was more than the effect of nervousness on her part.

And Psyche, though so quiet in appearance, was too much excited at Gordon's evident start of surprise or shock of anything else.

"I am so delighted to see you," he said, in a low tone, taking her hand and retaining it for a moment. "Cranbourne never told me you were here, and I have made several efforts to find you."

"Have you? My mother died, and I have had a great deal of grief and trouble since I last saw you."

"So I fear. You have been ill, too, haven't you?"

"No; I am not very well, but I shall soon be strong again."

And then dinner was announced. Gordon was asked to take Clytie in, and Charlie took Psyche, while Lord Clive followed in the rear.

"A very different dinner to some of those we have eaten together on the Pampas and at Santa Powl," observed Gordon, with a smile. "I am very much inclined to think I am in a dream, from which I shall wake up presently with an uncomfortable start."

"Yes; that sensation clung to me for a long time," said Charlie; "and when people addressed me as Lord Denborough I used to look about and wonder for an instant who they meant, but I am getting accustomed to it now, and learning to believe that is all real."

The servants had withdrawn, the ladies left for the drawing-room, Psyche looking a very different person from the girl who had walked like a languid ghost through the lofty and half deserted rooms of the castle, and Clytie could not help observing the change with a smile.

"Coming down to dinner didn't do you any harm," she said. "I don't think I shall have to send for a doctor after all."

"Of course you won't. I told you there was nothing the matter with me."

"I know you said so, and if you continue to look as bright as you do to-night I shall be compelled to believe it. Don't you think Mr. Gordon has become much plainer looking since he left us?"

"Oh, dear, no; I was thinking how remarkably handsome he looked."

Then, seeing the smile on Clytie's face, she added—

"It is not kind of you to quiz me, Clytie. I never served you in that way, but have been as blind and

deaf as a post when you and Lord Clive have been by."

"Yes, I know you have, but you did seem to think we were all so blind, and were pining and fretting yourself to death, and I was wondering what the cause of it could be, when the bright idea that you had missed your lover occurred to me."

"But you did not send for him on my account? Oh, Clytie, say that you didn't!"

"Charlie had written to invite him before I even thought of doing so," was the reply; "you know he saved my brother's life."

"If I thought he entertained the idea that it was for me he was invited here, I should feel ready to run away and hide myself," said Psyche, uneasily.

"He would entertain a very bad opinion of himself, and of all of us, if such an idea entered his head, and as you did not know he was coming or he, that you were here, I think you may both be satisfied that your dignity has not in the remotest manner been compromised."

Before the discussion could proceed further, they were joined by the gentlemen, and the evening passed off pleasantly, Psyche herself being surprised at the light heart and bright spirits which had suddenly come over her.

"By the way, I have written to Tregarth, at Santa Possi, offering him the management of some mines that seem to belong to us, in Cornwall," observed Charlie to Gordon; "he is a splendid fellow, but for him, I think I should have gone mad, or bad, during those two years I spent at the mines; the cold and solitude were something awful."

"Yes, I am glad you sent for him; he has friends in England, hasn't he?"

"Oh, yes, and a young woman, faithful and true, waiting to marry him. Indeed, we are all pairing off, except you, Gordon. I suppose you are going to be a crusty old bachelor, by way of contrast."

"I don't know," was the vague reply, and then the conversation became general.

The next morning, contrary to her usual custom, Psyche was the first to be down to breakfast.

Her watch had stopped during the night, and fearing to be late, she was an hour earlier than she intended.

It was a wretched morning. December had set in with a drizzling, half-frozen rain, and therefore the idea of taking a short walk in the grounds could not be entertained.

A bright fire burned in the handsome library that had been the favourite room in which the late earl spent the greater portion of his time, and there Psyche betook herself, for the windows of this side of the mansion looked out upon the sea.

She had taken up a book for a few minutes, but not being able to fix her attention on the page she laid it down and leaned against the window, looking out at the restless sea with a great tender light in her lovely eyes.

A footfall on the thick velvet carpet failed to arouse her from her reverie, and it was not until an arm was passed round her waist that she looked up, with a start and a blush, to find Gordon by her side.

"Psyche, am I to be a crusty old bachelor?" he asked, while his beard swept her face.

"I am sure I don't know," was the reply, while she made an effort to be free.

"The decision rests with you, for I shall have no wife unless the girl I hold now promises to be mine."

And the arm tightened in its clasp.

"You make very sure of me!" said the girl, with a flush of her old spirit.

"Not at all. I only tell you I shall marry no one else, but it does not follow that you will marry me."

And he took his arm away, leaving her standing, trembling, alone.

"I did not quite mean it," she said, while the tears started to her eyes.

"Then you will be my wife?"

"Yes."

The footman who came to announce breakfast soon after, was I regret to say it, exceedingly shocked when he opened the door.

Had it been Lady Clytie and Lord Clive it might have been different, he could have made some allowance for them, but as he explained to his friends in the servants' hall, he had never heard that these two young people were engaged.

His master and mistress heard it, however, before the morning was over, and very hearty were the congratulations which they offered on the occasion.

Another week has passed. Sir William Bentham, with his son and daughter, have come to the castle on a visit, and there is such a talk of weddings that anyone would suppose marrying and giving in mar-

riage was the only object one came into the world for.

There was nothing very special about Julia Bentham's half-brother, except a great disposition to flirt with both Psyche and Clytie, to a degree that irritated, if it did not provoke to outspoken anger, the men to whom they were engaged.

Christmas was approaching, and Charlie would have liked to have been married at once, but he had been persuaded to defer it till the following Easter, when his sister, and perhaps Psyche, would go off at the same time.

It wants but two days to Christmas. There has been some hard frost, and the whole party, with the exception of Clytie and Lord Clive, have gone off on some extemporized pleasure party.

Clytie is not yet strong enough to go in for any very violent exercise, and Clytie naturally prefers staying with him.

Her nervous fears have gone off of late, reasoned away, though now and again they will recur to her with uncomfortable persistence.

The days are short, the shadows are lengthening, the firelight throws a ruddy glow over the room in which the lovers are sitting, forgetful of everything but their own happiness, when suddenly, coming from whence no one could tell, a man stands before them.

A man with long, light hair hanging over his shoulders, with the glare of insanity in his eyes, and grasping something in his uplifted hand as though he would strike them.

Instinctively both felt who their enemy was, and Clytie, with the mad intention of saving her lover, sprang up, and caught the madman's uplifted arm.

"James, it is I. What is the matter?" she said, in an eager tone, trying to control and soothe him.

But he was utterly beyond her management. He freed himself from her grasp at his wrist, caught her round the waist with his other arm, and thus holding her, seeming to possess the strength of twenty men, he made towards the door, warding off Lord Clive's approach by brandishing the knife he held in his right hand.

Clytie's only thought was for her lover.

"Don't come near him, Victor," she cried.

But all her entreaties would have been in vain, for Clive, despite his weakness, was pressing upon his enemy, when the door of the room opened, and Charles, Earl of Denborough, stood for a moment looking at the strange scene, and doubting the evidence of his senses.

That moment was fatal, for, quick as lightning, Clubfoot sprang back against the wall, dashed the knife he held deep in Clytie's breast, and before the two men could leap forward to prevent it, he had with the same weapon literally severed the arteries in his own neck.

Lights were brought, and the distracted lover and brother found the girl they loved covered with her own and her would-be assassin's blood.

Doctors were sent for, but before any could arrive, Gordon, who knew something of surgery, bound up Clytie's wound, but, with a face so grave and pale, that all who looked on felt he considered the case almost hopeless.

As for James Clubfoot, human skill could avail him nothing. He never spoke again, and in a few seconds his wretched life was ended.

Christmas morning came, but there was no joy or festivity at Denborough Castle, for there was death in the house, and the grim phantom hovered about, doubtful if he would not at the same time take with him another fair young life.

But at length he goes away without it, for the doctors tell the wailing and weeping friends that there is hope, and their gratitude and thankfulness are deeper and happier emotions than any other feeling at the moment could be.

Clytie did not die, but she was not married at Easter, though Charlie and Julia were.

Neither was Psyche. The death of her brother and his outrage upon Clytie's life had been such a shock to her, that, had her friend died, Gordon would never have been able to rouse her, or persuade her to marry him.

The wedding day came at length, however, and one bright June morning Lord Denborough gave away his sister to Lord Clive, and Psyche to his friend Gordon, while his young countess looked on, a contrast in her dark loveliness to the fair beauty of the two brides.

I must not forget to mention also that Tots and Jim Curtis were joined together in the bonds of holy matrimony at the same time.

Caroline Burlington did not go unpunished for the part she had played in what had so nearly been a tragedy.

Investigation exposed the fact that James Clubfoot,

after leaving Denborough Castle that morning succeeding his attack upon Lord Clive, had been sent by Miss Burlington to Jonah Crabtree's hut, the brother, it will be remembered, of her own maid, Phoebe, and under whose guardianship she had intended Clytie to be placed.

Here, almost as a prisoner, he had remained, escaping sometimes, but always coming back to his hiding place, until the fatal night when he ended his own life, and nearly terminated that of our heroine.

And, as Caroline Burlington was proved to have paid for his refuge, the natural inference was that she was in some way responsible for the deed, and she found it prudent to leave England somewhat suddenly, to avoid somewhat unpleasant inquiries.

She had sown dissension, planned deeds of violence, and now, when the beauty and freshness of life has departed, she is desolate and an exile.

Of the happiness of those she had planned and plotted against, there could be no doubt their trials had given them strength of purpose and loftiness of character, such as they would never otherwise have possessed, and made them not merely ornamental but useful members of society.

Tots' observation on leaving Denborough Church that bright June morning was characteristic.

"There, Jem," she said, giving her husband's arm a squeeze, "don't I always get what I pray for?"

"Sure, I don't know; if you prayed for a fine day you got it for certain."

"Fine day, indeed. I prayed that we and the young ladies might be married together, and so we are; now don't tell me prayers is never answered."

Jem had no intention of doing anything of the kind, and thus the small couple followed the others out of the church, quite as remarkable in their way as the young peer and peeress.

END.

THE WOMEN OF SERVIA.

THEY wear on their heads red kerchiefs, with the ends hanging down their backs, bound on their heads by a velvet fillet embroidered with coins, in which were often stuck flowers, chiefly of red and white. They were generally dressed in white, but invariably with the brilliant apron sewed down to the skirt, and often with a gaudily-embroidered stomacher, or perhaps breastplate would be the more descriptive term, studded with coins on black velvet.

The working-dress of the women in the fields is a short jacket, braided and slashed in the fashions of the cut of that worn by the men, a red and yellow kerchief crossed over the bosom, a petticoat striped mostly in the parallel stripes of Moorish pattern, but occasionally in the checkered, which makes the pattern a tartan, a tapestry-like apron of brighter colours than the petticoat, and bare legs and feet.

The men are a fine race, tall, with a certain洒ness and self-respect in every gesture; their faces are almost always good, and often quite intellectual and chivalrous, but in muscular development the peasant-women of Servia can give their husbands a score and a beating.

CORK SCREWS.

If each of us has an *bête à figure*, each of us has a quality, which, without being fanciful, might be likened to some instrument or implement of common use. We have the aggressive hammer and the passive anvil as one familiar example; the file which rasps and rasps at all the independent angles, all the ornamentation, even, of the unfortunate being on which it exercises its power, till it has reduced the whole surface to the state of smoothness and monotony desired; the keen and glancing rapier which wounds you to the heart with as clean and neat a stroke; the heavy-knotted bludgeon which breaks down your defence-work noisily; the little unseen gimlet of slander, say, which bores a hole in the noble ship that sinks it to the bottom; the grindstone on which wits are sharpened and intellect brought to a point; the harrow, with its proverbial toad under the teeth; the pioneer of new thoughts, new facts, whose axe hews down primeval forests, and whose sharp, strong plough breaks up virgin soil.

The list might be increased indefinitely, till we found an analogy in every instrument that we employ, from the surgeon's lancet to the ploughman's staff, from the microscopic mind intent on minute details to the huge commercial crane occupied with the weightiest and least interesting questions of

public interest. But among the rest we have one little instrument with its analogy so perfectly represented in humanity that we cannot pass it by—namely, corkscrews, and their methods of life and action.

Wherever any good is to be had, there are corkscrews to be found, digging their points into the stopper, and working away vigorously to get at the contents. They worm themselves everywhere. At fêtes for admission to which interest has to be made, and where it is a special honour to be seen; at all shows which cost money, and which have been especially designed to keep out the lower or poorer half of the middle classes—and your corkscrews are very poor indeed, and scarcely able, as you know, to afford the price of admission-fee required of all comers—at every speciality of social life, there your corkscrews turn up radiant, and give you cause of speculation for half the day after, how in the name of fortune they got there.

They go everywhere and see everything, and this without a penny of outlay; for someone gives them their tickets, and someone takes them to and fro in the carriage, and someone in all probability gives them their fine clothes, for the mere shame of their old ones, on the one side, or on the other impelled by that marvellous power possessed by corkscrews, by which power even caps and bonnets can be extracted from the magic bottle of life.

This kind of corkscrew is ubiquitous, and there is no means of escaping its all-pervading presence. Have you yet places which as yet have been kept sacred from their intrusion? favourite friends whom you have not shared, nor wish to share? There is sure to come the day when you tumble on the corkscrew, quietly surveying your sacred retreat, and making up his mind as to where he shall establish himself for the summer; and as sure is the day to come when you will find him seated in the place of honour at your friend's table, where he will behave as if it had been by no manoeuvres that he had got there, and was no matter of surprise to find himself there at all, but as if he had been accustomed to his place from the beginning of things, and you were rather the interloper than he. How it was done you could never understand; but there it is.

Your fastidious friends, whom you have kept to yourself as your own private property—and that other private property, your sacred place of retreat—both have been "drawn" by that clever and irrepressible corkscrew, who worms his way everywhere, and effects his purpose so silently, with such artful twists and turns, that resistance is impossible, because he never offers any point or gives any moment when he can be resisted.

Corkscrews worm themselves into your confidence, too; and before you are fully aware of it yourself, you have told them all about your affairs, and laid into their hands the secrets which hitherto you had been so solicitous to keep closely held in your own.

By show of sympathy, by clever guesses, by direct questions that have side issues, and by every kind of indirect endeavour, they unhook you and empty you, and henceforth possess your mind and are masters of your history. Like many other things pertaining to them, you never know how it was done, but only the result; and that result does not always please you.

For perhaps the corkscrew was the last person in the world to whom you would willingly have confided your affairs; but you were weak, or unsuspecting, or rash, or without the faculty of foresight; so you let that twisted spiral first touch, then penetrate, and finally extract and make his own, what up to this moment had been yours only.

You are not the first, nor will you be the last, on whom these people exert their faculty of corkscrewing. Nothing but the surliest repulsion, acted on by the acutest sense of suspicion, affords any defence against these subtle and ingenious creatures. If you are magnanimous, or generous, or affectionate, or unsuspicious, the thing is at an end; and they are masters of the situation and possessors of all your closed chapters.

WALL PAPERS AND TYPHOID FEVER.—Several members of a family, who had been sick with typhoid fever, had a room repapered, and found that there were no less than twenty-five wall papers already on well. The presence of this mass of decomposing paste and paper sufficiently accounted for the disagreeable smell that was always noticeable, although drains and water-closets were well trapped.

SOUND.—In the open air, under ordinary pressure, sound travels at the rate of 1090 feet per second, and decreases rapidly with the diameter.

HIS EVIL GENIUS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TURN De Lyons turned to the demon, and said:

"Now, show us, if you can, who it is that I love best in the world."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there appeared an exact representation of himself, with his favourite china pipe in his mouth—the identical one, as we could see by the picture on it, which he had been smoking that very evening in his own room.

"You be blistered!" said Taraxacum, boldly, "and don't let us have any of your impudence."

Our visitor laughed uproariously, and looked quite benignly upon the forward youth with the same kind expression in his eyes towards him as I have already mentioned as noticing in the professor when Taraxacum treated him sometimes with his cool familiarity.

"But now," said the latter, "let us see my greatest enemy. I should like to know who he is."

The last vision was flapped out as he spoke; but lo! there was Taraxacum himself again, only not in quite the same costume as before; half undressed, he was reclining with one leg thrown over the arm of his chair, and, to judge by his general appearance, rather more than less in a state of liquor.

De Lyons was furious, and the party laughed again with the most thorough good humour, as if he enjoyed the joke intensely.

"Gammon!" said De Lyons, sulkily. "But now let us see in what manner my death is to be."

The scene that now rose before us was totally different from what had gone before. We seemed to be on some great height, from which a vast panorama of a wild and very beautiful country stretched away to an infinite distance below us.

Thousands of figures, indistinct at first, were flitting and stirring in all directions; guns were flashing—though there was no sort of sound—riderless horses rushing madly about, trampling over the carcasses of men, which we now saw were strewed in all directions.

It was some tremendous battle; there could be no doubt about it—a siege—a regular assault; line after line working their way up against huge earthworks. See how they are repulsed and beaten back, falling by thousands, but as they fall their places are filled by others, who rush on undauntedly to the same fate. Bravo, how glorious to witness!

But of what nation are these men. They are not Germans—at least, there are neither the white coats of the Austrians, nor the dark blue Prussians—they are not the soldiers of this country of Saxony; no fear of them marching up thus manfully to be ploughed down by whole lines and columns at a time; there are no red-coated English, or plaided Highlanders amongst them; the uniforms are more like the French, but the men themselves have not much of that type about them, they seemed tall, gaunt-limbed, with yellow hair and beards.

Now again more regiments came pouring on, but only to be beaten back again as those before them have been. Now see, they are turning; in another moment their ranks will be broken in confusion—no, look at that gallant young fellow, cap in hand; how he cheers them to the advance! He has snatched the colours from a staggering sergeant's hand; he waves them as he rallies his men in front.

What colours are they?—surely not—white with red stripes, and a lot of stars on a blue ground in one corner—yes, it must be so; the Yankees, by all that is wonderful! But who can they be fighting against? why they have not as many men in their whole army, militia included, as there are regiments here.

And where can this awful war be going on? Are the Americans about to invade any of the old-established countries of Europe? or has Europe combined to send so many thousands over to America? These are but lying visions of what is to be, and utter impossibilities!

The party, who all this time seemed actually even more interested than ourselves, and in a state of the most intense enjoyment at the scene before us, rubbing his hands, and grinning with delight, suddenly pointed with his finger to the gallant fellow we had already noticed with the colours. A bullet had evidently struck him in the breast just as the party points exultingly at him. He sprang upwards, and, flinging out his arms, fell with the colours, which he kept still convulsively clasped in his grasp.

As he went down we distinctly recognised the features and form of De Lyons, in another minute to be trampled out of all further recognition under

the heels of friends and foes, as they in turn held or lost the hardly-contested ground.

"If I am to live till I am killed fighting battles among the most peaceable and most money-loving republicans in the world, there is not much fear for me just yet," was the thought that passed through De Lyons, and so all of our minds. "Why he loves falsehoods so much, he goes out of his way to find them, and invent facts which never can come to pass."

"And now for the other gentleman, whose acquaintance I am proud to make," said the strange party, turning with a low bow towards myself, still with the same exceeding politeness, but perhaps just a slight dash of satirical malice in his tone and manner. "Have a peep at the last page before-hand? Or is there by chance any person, any charming young lady, for instance, whom he might like to see, or have a peep at what she was doing or thinking about at this moment?"

I should have liked to have had a glimpse, if only for a bare instant, of my poor dear Katie, but the very wish, under such circumstances, seemed down-right profanation.

"Show me the little wretch," I said, "who has wronged me, and done me evil since my earliest days; and if I can see a vision of myself, in future wreaking my utter vengeance upon him, I shall be all the better pleased; and firmly trust that you have shown us the truth, at least for once in a way."

He had put his head on one side as I spoke, as if not quite for the moment understanding me.

"Ah, to be sure," seeming to recollect suddenly. "What was I thinking of? Of course you shall. Would you like him to come in himself in propria persona? The fact is, I have been expecting him here the whole of this time."

As he spoke, we heard footsteps outside, the tapistry over the door was pushed back, and in walked Gorles himself. I had never set eyes upon him, you remember, since that 4th of June.

He had come down again to Eton after having left, just six years before; but he was hardly, if at all, altered, his face perhaps a little browner, and he had a few sprouting hairs upon his chin, and an apology for a moustache on his upper lip, very much like a worn-down tooth-brush, was, I know, Taraxacum's mental simile.

The professor, I suppose, was instantly aware of my desire to rush at and throttle him, for he gripped me more tightly than ever by the hand; and then the more prudent second thought shot through my mind to wait and see what would turn up.

Gorles stopped short at the door, and looked astonished, thunderstruck; but whether at thus finding himself face to face with me, or that seeing us standing, as we were, in the bright moonlight, he at a glance divined what we were about, I cannot say.

That probably was it though, for he turned sharp round as if he quite expected to see our visitor, who was standing there bowing, smirking, and looking quite pleased and fondly upon him, just as I have seen a father do when he has presented himself suddenly to his little child, who takes a moment or so before he recognises and rushes to him.

Hate the little brute as I did, I couldn't help admiring his perfect sang froid and pluck. I felt my own—our own, as we shared it amongst us—vibrate again in unison with what, after all, was of course part and parcel of itself.

"We are delighted to see you," said the mysterious party; "the fact is, we were just speaking of you. But here is a very angry violent gentleman, threatening and vowing all manner of dreadful things against you; and I was just on the point of telling him when you came in unexpectedly"—(there was another falsehood again, but we didn't think it worth while interrupting him)" that you were much too dear and faithful a friend of mine for me to think of allowing any such language or sentiments in my presence. But, now you are here yourself, let me tell him fairly and openly before you, and in the presence of these my comrades and friends, that any attack now or hereafter upon you I shall consider as against myself."

"Those who serve me faithfully I will serve; and I have no notion of allowing such audacity and defiance," he said, changing suddenly from his bantering, easy manner, to a most contemptuous, sneering, confidential aside, as he drew close to and feigned to whisper aloud into Gorles' ear, though he kept his eyes fixed over his shoulder upon me.

"Let him attack you; tempt him to do it, my dear young friend. Don't avoid him—lay yourself in his way; every time you meet him shall bring a curse upon him—your gains shall be his losses—your good luck shall be at his expense. Let him but once be induced to lay the weight of only his little finger upon you to do you harm—coax him, bribe him, taunt him, I say, into doing so, and from that moment he himself and all be care for shall be completely under your power."

"Heaven forbid!" burst from me involuntarily, as I threw up from mine the hand of the professor. That holy name passed my lips all vanished in an instant.

The stranger, Gorles, my companions, and the whole room seemed to have been swept away in one blow—that is, I suppose that it was I myself was carried away from them.

When I opened my eyes I couldn't the least make out where I was.

I put my hand up to scratch my head, I suppose—as I have, I know, rather a trick of doing when wanting particularly to consider any matter.

To my surprise, there was not a hair upon it—I was as bald as a basin.

I was in bed, but not my own, as I saw by the texture and pattern of the furniture.

I put back the curtain, and noticing several bottles and gallipots on the table by my bedside, and a large armchair with a distinctly defined impression left in the soft cushion, showing that some one had not long since been sitting there, it began to dawn upon me that I may have been lying seriously ill—taken suddenly, I supposed, over night in the professor's rooms.

But who could have been taking care of me? I sniffed strongly, as I wondered whether it could have been that good fellow Taraxacum, for I knew he would have been sure to have left a strong fume of tobacco behind him.

No; I could only recognise lavender and fresh-cut flowers: a large bouquet was standing in a glass upon a table in the window, which was wide open.

The window was new to me, and exactly on the opposite side of the room to which I at first turned my eyes, expecting to find it.

I had no idea where I could be; it was certainly some room I had never even seen before.

The ceiling and walls were painted in bright colours with garlands of flowers upon them, and butterflies, and here and there a plump little Cupid, sticking about in various topsy-turvy attitudes.

While I was yet wondering, the stentorian voice of some man yelling in the street below shook the very room, like the bellowing of all the bulls in Bashan; it was to my ears an unknown tongue.

That it wasn't German I was certain, but what on earth "Cocomero!" might be I could not guess; so I thought I would just hop out of bed and have a look.

Easier thought than done, though. By Jove! I found I could hardly lift hand or foot; it was just as much as I could do to shove myself up a bit on my pillow.

I looked at my hands, I felt my arms; they were more like cricket-stumps than the limbs I had last gone to bed with.

"Here's a go," I thought to myself; "those swindling beggars have helped themselves to all my nerve and pluck; and I suppose all my natural strength has gone with them, and they have forgotten to return them to me, as they promised to do."

That reflection brought back the whole of the over night scene distinctly to my mind.

I supposed that either one or the other of them would have the grace to look in before long; so I shut my eyes that I might quietly think the better, and resigned myself patiently to wait.

Presently there came a light footstep at the door, the rustle of a female dress. Quickly as I opened my eyes again, I only just caught a glimpse of the tail of a gown, as if whoever it might be had just looked in and whisked quickly out again.

"Now for it," I thought; "I am quite prepared for what must in regular course be going to happen."

I felt myself to be exactly in the enviable position of those harum-scarum heroes in those jolly Irish novels which were the delight of our youth.

I had certainly last night got myself into what might have proved a considerably awkward scrape—that there was no denying—but, most luckily, have got out of it just as those rattling fellows always did.

All had suddenly passed before me as a dream.

Yes, so far all was right, sure enough. And now when I should open my eyes, which I had shut again, by-the-bye, so that it should all happen regular, I should of course find the heroine—the long and deeply loved object of my affections—who would have been nursing and watching over me; and whom I should only just have time to recognise, as with an arch look and a light step her lovely form would in a most provoking manner vanish from my apartment.

But, of course, as soon as I was up again and decently dressed in my clothes—of which articles, by the way, I could see no signs about the room—we should meet; everything would be arranged all right, and we should live very happy ever afterwards.

I felt for the moment quite convinced that I had been brought somehow into my kind uncle's house; and my heart began to bump fit to knock its way through as I pictured to myself quite vividly dear little Katie and the relenting colonel, even then whispering and smiling to one another on the other side of the door, and in another instant coming in to declare themselves.

"Here she is," I thought, "I hear the sweep of her dress again, slowly peeping in." I had actually made sure that it must be Katie, fresh-looking and blooming as ever.

Not a bit of it—but who do you think instead? Why, my own dearest old mother!

An exclamation of surprise, and—well, I honestly think it was—delight rose to my lips; but I actually hadn't strength enough to make more than a shrill sort of shriek, as I uttered the word "Mother!" in a sort of hoarse whisper.

Hang it! those rascals must have borrowed my voice as well as my strength for some of their mysterious games. It was too bad; and I said so, as my mother, rushing to my bedside, threw herself down with her face laid against mine upon the pillow, kissing and fondling, and then stopping for a minute to look at me with her eyes running over with tears and smiles, and then falling to kiss my face, my mouth, and even the bald top of my head.

"That's too much of a good thing, and a mean advantage they have taken, is it not, mother dear?" I said; "and so I shall tell the professor and Master Taraxacum when they come in, as I suppose they will do. Haven't either of them been down here this morning? But how on earth did you turn up here in Dresden?"

My mother looked at me with a scared expression, and then said—

"You must not attempt to talk, dearest, or exert yourself. But you do know me, dear Frank, don't you now? Don't speak, but nod your head ever so little, if you do."

"Know you, dear mother?" I whispered; "of course I do. But why couldn't you write to say you were coming? And now tell me, where am I? I had forgotten that I had found out I was in some strange lodgings for a minute or so, but was now beginning to put two and two together. 'Have I been very ill? and if so, how long? How did I get out of the professor's rooms last night? And did you hear how they got rid of the — party — you know who I mean—when they had grown tired of his company?'"

"Hush, my darling; you really must not even try to talk, or I shall be obliged to go away again, and leave you."

I couldn't get my mother to answer any sort of questions, for what seemed to me—though I cannot be sure of that—ever so many days; so there I just had to lie on my back and wonder.

There used to come every day, sometimes twice, a puny-looking little old fellow of a doctor, who on the morning on which, as I have described, I first came to myself, walked into my room more like King Bombastes in the play than anything I ever saw before in real life.

His nose stuck straight up in the air, and his toes turned out; he solemnly advanced about half-a-dozen paces, made a very low bow with a grand sweep of his hat to my mother, then marched up to my bedside, and made another low bow to myself. As he took hold of my pulse he perked up his lips and his eyebrows into such an absurdly comical expression that I, really thinking that he was funny character making a buffoon of himself purposely to divert me, burst into a fit of laughter, which made my poor weak ribs and sides smart again.

"This is Doctor Zanzani, my dear," said my mother, with an uneasy, imploring sort of look directed towards me.

"Of European reputation," chimed in the doctor, quite solemnly, but with such a serio-comic face, that in spite of myself, and the pain it gave me, I broke into another laugh, which shook me, and put me to worse torture than before.

It occurred to me that I must have been ill of some disease, quinsy perhaps, which can only be cured by laughing (I am sure I have heard of such cases), and this eminent doctor was not above thus calling in the functions of nature in aid of art. I wondered whether this irresistible drollery of manner was his own happy invention, or acquired by diligent study and rehearsal.

Dr. Zanzani did not seem exactly to know what to make of me. He gave two or three great gulps, like a stranded fish, and then turned round and addressed my mother as "Signora," though they carried on the conversation in French. English he professed to know, as I afterwards discovered, but beyond those three words which he had uttered, and, as it appeared, never omitted to utter whenever presented by name to any British or American citizen,

his acquaintance with that tongue was limited. He did not appear particularly handy with his French either; nor, for the matter of that, was my dear mother as good as I dare say she had been when some twenty years or so younger; but they managed to get along somehow.

"A trifle better, perhaps, but still wandering in his mind, as this wild laughter without cause betokens. We must not yet be too sanguine, signora," he pronounced, pompously, in reply to my mother's eager report, that I had that morning known her, and called her by name. It was amazing what a point she seemed to make of that very simple ebullition of natural affection on my part, and intensely delighted at it.

As far as I could make out, he said that if I made fair progress, in three or four days' time he should hope to bleed me again.

Confound him! then that was what had made me so awfully weak, was it? and getting my hand up to my arm, sure enough I found it all bandaged up, which I had never noticed till then.

My mother seemed to demur rather at that idea, and so they fell out, and I fell off to sleep again, I suppose; for I have a very dim, if any, recollection of the rest of that day, or indeed for over so many days after, except that I was continually being crammed at all sorts of hours—sometimes daylight, sometimes lamplight—with basins of beef tea and strong soups, and I found myself gradually growing stronger.

And all that time, as I have said, my mother would never let me speak, or, what was even more aggravating, answer any questions when I asked them in spite of her admonitions, or give any explanations, which at times I longed for intensely, and then again I would feel that I didn't care a rap whether I knew or not.

Old Pomposity Zany, as I christened him, used to come regularly; but he didn't get his own way about bleeding me again.

I quite looked forward to his visits, they amused me so awfully; but I never laughed outright at his antics again, though I used to chaff and draw him out quietly sometimes, to my dear mother's constant trepidation.

I often complimented him upon his knowledge of English, and tried to make him talk in it; but he said that though he knew it thoroughly theoretically, he somehow never could acquire the art of either reading or speaking it practically.

At last, one day I was allowed to be moved on to a sofa near the window, and have my first wing of chicken for dinner; I never shall forget the effect of that first gaze out of the window on to a sort of terrace or wide quay, below which ran a rapid river.

There were handsome carriages, really first-rate turn-outs, with splendid horses and well-groomed liveries, and smart ladies inside, pretty girls with great big straw hats and whale baskets full of most lovely flowers, the strong scent of which quite perfumed the air and reached me where I lay; lots of children and nurses, soldiers—a regular busy throng. It must evidently be some considerable city we were in, but still I had not an idea where.

It was a lovely afternoon, or rather evening it must be by the setting sun, which was just lighting up the bright roofs of some buildings and the tops of some beautiful mountains which I could catch glimpses of between the houses and a church on the opposite side of the river, with dyes of gold, and blue and violet.

I suppose, after having kept to my dull bed so long, I appreciated it all the more; but I do not know that I ever felt touched as with the quiet, indescribable beauty of that evening.

"Here is a letter from your father, Frank," said my mother; "would you like to read it? You have actually never once asked after him;" and she looked quite reproachfully at me for a minute, for though the best and kindest of mothers, she could look reproachfully when she liked, I can tell you.

"That is too bad," I answered, "for how could I when you never even let me get through one question to ask where I am all this time. Well, but how is this? This is an old letter—why, it was written last year, my dear mother. Look, it is dated September."

"Well, my dear, this is only the 2nd, and it is six days' post from England, though now very shortly they say that, when the railroads are open, it will be reduced to four, or even three."

"Second!" I cried; "second of what? Why, we have not got through the middle of June yet, have we?"

My mother looked at me aghast, and said—

"Why, Frank, to-day is the 2nd of October."

I really thought she was making game of me.

"Come," I said, "dear mother, that won't quite do. People do not lie in sick beds with windows wide open in October, nor do such flowers as these,

or those baskets full in the street there, blow in October."

We always had a lovely bouquet fresh every morning set upon the table, made of carnations, jessamines, tubs roses, and every sort of delicious smelling flower.

I turned the letter round before I opened it, to have a look at the direction:

"A Madame,

"Madame Lambard,

"Casa Lippini."

"Firenze."

"I am none the wiser now," I said; "I never heard of such a city as Casa Lippini, and have no idea in even what quarter of the globe a country called Firenze may happen to be, unless—" "I don't know why, I had some vague idea of some such name in my old geography books,—connected with the northern regions of Africa. But niggers don't drive in such stunning turns-out as those below us; besides, the people in them are white, and some of them, as far as I can judge at this distance, uncommonly beautiful."

"Did you ever happen to learn in your geography books of a capital called Florence?" my mother asked, smiling.

"You don't mean to say we are in Florence now? of all others in the world, the place I have always most wished to come to, to see the picture galleries, which I have heard are the first and the finest in the world!"

"Well, make haste and get well, and your love of pictures will be fully gratified, you may rely upon it."

"Have you, then, been to them yet, mother?"

"No I, my dear Frank; I have never been a whole hour from your bedside since we arrived at this place, which will be five weeks exactly to-morrow. Your father went three or four times while he was here, and his accounts of what he had seen were marvelous."

"My father! Has my father actually been here, too, and I have never seen him, or, at least, known him, if I have done so?"

"Your father only left this place a fortnight since. That letter, as you may see, announces his safe arrival at home. He stayed on in hopes of some change in you for the better, up to the last moment; but he was obliged to return to England upon some important business, as well as some very troublesome law matters about a will; and as the doctors declared that you might go on for weeks, or perhaps months, without recovering, he determined, though most reluctantly, to set off, and come out again to join us, in hope of then finding you better, as soon as he could possibly get away."

"It begins to strike me, my dear mother, rather forcibly that I have been rather seriously ill. What has been the matter with me? How came you to come out to me at Dresden? And how did you manage to bring me, in the state I must have been, all the way down here? And, in short, please to tell me, mamma, all about everything, beginning quite at the beginning, and going all the way down to the end."

Well, it seemed that not having heard from me for some considerable time—I never was a good hand at letter writing—my parents had been growing very forgetful, particularly as I had never acknowledged a remittance of money which had been sent to me; that two letters, and a telegram desiring me to send back a notification of my existence immediately by the same conveyance, had received not the slightest acknowledgment.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

SCENITIC PLASTIC.—A plaster of this description, which is said to be successfully employed in Edinburgh, is prepared from a mixture of hydraulic lime, gypsum, and siliceous sand. The method of preparation is as follows: Any fair hydraulic limestone is calcined and mixed with about five per cent. of dehydrated gypsum. After grinding to a fine powder, this mixture is made into a mortar with about five or six parts of clear, sharp sand, and without hair. When laid on as a plaster, our account affirms, this cement sets, dries, and hardens within twenty-four hours, so that a second coat can be laid on the second day, and houses thus plastered are fit for immediate habitation. This preparation, furthermore, is represented to be impervious to moisture, and not subject to breaking or blistering, as is frequently the case with imperfectly slaked lime. Its cost in Edinburgh is said to be no greater than that of ordinary mortar.

A CRACK IN THE 80-TON GUN.—Just as the ex-

periments with the 80-ton gun were on the eve of compilation a vexatious mishap has occurred, serious enough in itself, but not thought of sufficient importance to prevent the conclusion of the programme. The holes pierced through the body of the gun for the insertion of the pressure-gauges have been calculated to weaken it in no slight degree, and it should be recorded to the credit of the great weapon that it has fired 100 rounds, in which it has burnt 23 tons of powder, and discharged 130 tons of shot. To this must be added the fact that the charges fired in the latter stages of the trials have been much heavier than was contemplated in the design of the gun, and that the closer confinement of the powder gases secured by the gas-checks has also, to some extent, aided to the work imposed upon the great cannon. The authorities, therefore, have regarded, and still regard, with satisfaction the unimpaired condition of the main structure, while they admit, as they have always admitted, that the steel tube or lining of the gun is its one weak and unreliable part. In this steel tube a crack has been discovered. Guttapercha impressions of the bore have been taken at various stages, and the examination made in this way, preparatory to the renewed trials arranged for the present week, revealed the presence of the incipient fracture. The thickness of the steel at the point of injury is about four inches, and the crack, which is at present scarcely perceptible, is situated at some distance from the powder chamber, and is of small extent. It is believed that two or three rounds have been fired since the injury happened, and that the gun is as fit for work as ever it was, the lining never being rolled upon as contributing anything to the strength of the barrel. The trial of the gun against the armament at Shoeburyness will, therefore, probably take place before it is retubed, as the delay of that experiment would be inconvenient, seeing how much the construction of the guns in progress depends upon the result; but it is understood that the few rounds remaining to test the ammunition will be dispensed with. The early removal of the gun from its present position facing the Maplin Sands may, therefore be expected.

THE CREMATION OF BARON DE PALM.—It is not exactly clear what the gentlemen who invited a number of physicians and scientific men to visit an out-of-the-way little Pennsylvania town, and there to witness the burning of an embalmed corpse, expected to prove by the operation. The deceased, an eccentric person named Baron de Palm, expressed, before dying, a desire to be cremated. His equally eccentric executors felt morally bound to accede to his wishes; but instead of quietly and decently burning the body, say in any gas retort or pudding furnace, they used a special apparatus constructed in the village aforesaid, after lavishly advertising the show and themselves for several weeks in advance. In the presence of a crowd, numbering very few scientists but very many newspaper reporters and morbid sight-seers, the withered corpse was placed in an iron basket, shoved into a retort heated to 2,300 degrees, and in three hours it was reduced to ashes. Cost, ten dollars. We venture to think that most people, even before this experiment took place, knew that a human body can be incinerated at the above high temperature in a brief space of time: and that it is no difficult matter to lead away evolved gases. Hence we fail to see wherein the much vaunted scientific interest of these crematory proceedings existed. So far as their effect upon the public mind is concerned, the sentiment left after the perusal of the published details of the burning and of the scenes attending it will savour strongly of disgust.

USE OF FLIES.—Although flies are, in summer, the pest of our lives, and we wonder why they were ever made at all, it should be remembered that they have an infancy as maggots, and the loathsome life they then lead as scavengers, cleanses and purifies the August air, and lowers the death-rate of our cities and towns. Thus, while stables and piggeries and filth are tolerated by city and town authorities, the young of the house-fly and the flesh and blowfly, with their thousand allies, are doing something toward purifying the pestilential air and averting the summer brood of cholera, dysentery, diphteria, typhus and typhoid fever, which descend like harpies upon the devoted towns and cities. It may be regarded as an axiom that where flies most abound, there filth, death-dealing and baneful, is most abundant, and filth-diseases such as we have named most do congregate. A fly that is born in August generally lives a month or six weeks, and dies at the coming of frost, either of cold or from the attacks of fungoid plants. A few, probably, winter over and survive until midsummer, and thus maintain the existence of this useful species, to which civilised man owes more than he can readily estimate, and with which he can dispense only

when the health of cities and towns is looked after with far greater vigilance and intelligence than is perhaps likely to be the case for several centuries to come.

A CHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF TEARS.—Modern men of science respect nothing. Nothing is sacred in their eyes. We might perhaps forgive even the vivisector who slays a live animal, in order to ascertain at what rate pain travels from any given portion of a nerve to the centre of sensation; but we cannot pardon these unfeeling scientists who are ruthlessly unperturbing those portions of the human body which form the principal part of the stock-in-trade of the novelist and the poet. The unimaginative wretches assure us that the heart is merely a pump, and add that when we sing of hearts of oak, we are merely enthusiastic about wooden pumps; to told the beloved to one heart is simply to press her against a pump, and to say of a milkman that he is warm-hearted, is only to affirm that his pump is never frozen. Till now, however, those expressive and eloquent messengers of the heart—tears, had escaped the profanation of the men of science. A continental savant has at length dared to make a chemical analysis of those beautiful poetic machines. A tear, says science, is merely a chemical combination of oxygen, hydrogen, azote, &c., so that when we say "the charming creature's face was bedewed with tears," we really mean that her visage was moistened by a solution of oxygen, hydrogen, azote, and other chemical bodies too numerous to mention. The savant above mentioned, to be certain that his experiment was performed on a genuine tear, obtained one from the eye of a brother savant. To make a man of science weep may seem an impossibility; but our ingenious savant did so by telling his brother savant that a rival of his had been elected a member of a learned society in which he was ambitious of belonging. The ruse was most successful, and the genuine tear at once obtained. It is to be hoped that some learned society will give this pitiless analyser a mission to the Nile, to study the tears of a crocodile, and that the monster will swallow him. It would not be too severe a punishment for his attempt to lessen the literature that still remains in life.

WEALTHY GIPSIES.

We have so long been accustomed to look upon the gipsy as a wandering outcast—a tinkering, jockeying, unambitious vagabond—that we learn with surprise that amongst the gipsies of Moscow there are not a few who inhabit stately houses, go abroad in elegant equipages, and are behind the higher orders of the Russians, neither in appearance nor mental requirements. This change in their social condition is attributable to their proficiency in song, which has been exercised before the nobility and gentry of Moscow by female gipsies from a very early period.

Perhaps the highest compliment ever paid to a songster was by Catalani herself to one of these daughters of Russia. The celebrated Italian cantatrice was so enchanted with the voice of a Moscow gipsy that she tore from her own shoulders a cashmere shawl, which had been presented to her by the Pope, and embracing the gipsy, insisted on her acceptance of the splendid gift.

Large sums of money are frequently acquired through this talent of song among the gipsy females, who are thereby enabled to support their relatives in affluence and luxury.

RICHARD PEMBERTON;

—on—

THE SELF-MADE JUDGE.

CHAPTER XVII.

The excursion boat had now reached the pier. A crowd of men were forward, some securing her to the pier, some throwing out the plank, some bringing forward baskets, cans, and hampers that were to go on shore.

Everyone was too much engaged to notice a newcomer, who, besides, kept out of the range of observation.

Then Norma heard a sudden running to and fro in the cabin, and she knew they had missed the child. Seizing a hamper as an excuse, she mingled with the crowd that was passing over the plank and gained the shore.

Creeping along under the shadows, she gained the city streets, and swiftly and stealthily passing through them, she at last reached the opposite suburb, ran across the green fields, and gained the wood, the scene of her agony and bereavement.

Here she sat down in the trepidation, in the breathless delight of an accomplished vengeance. She knew the hearts of those she had left behind were wrung with agony—as hers was once. It was very sweet.

She laughed aloud. Her laughter rang through the silent wood. The child moved restlessly in her arms; she did not notice it. She was palpitating with joy at the fruition of her vengeance.

She needed not to see the anguish of her adversary, she felt it. But the strong little child moved vigorously under her shawl, heaved itself over, and threw out one of its fat, peevish arms. Then she opened her shawl, and fanned its robe to give it air, and then little Maud, wearied to exhaustion by the playing and tossing and caressing she had received during the day, fell asleep.

And now a dilemma presented itself. Her vengeance was accomplished—the child was stolen; but now what should be done with little Maud. Suspicion on the part of its friends, of the theft of the babe, and consequent pursuit of her, was out of the question—the false evidence of the infant's supposed fate was too conclusive to them.

Maud was lost for ever, drowned in the river. But now that her revenge was consummated, what should she do with the child?

She turned the problem over in her mind till near the dawn of morning, and then another question less imposing, but more exacting, presented itself; where, and how, to get a breakfast, for the poor wretch was famishing.

She resolved to beg one from the nearest farmhouse, certain of getting it from the benevolent country people.

But first to make assurance of impunity doubly sure, she determined to undress the babe, destroy all her rich clothing, and then wrapper her, beggar-like, in some of her own rags.

Softly and slowly, not to awaken the child—for somehow or other, with all her obduracy, Norah had a terrible foreboding of what the first waking would be, and dreaded to meet it—so softly and slowly as not to awaken the child, she undressed and slipped off its robe, shoes, socks, and skirts, and made a bundle of the child's clothing, resolving to burn them at the first opportunity.

She tied the bundle in her own dingy handkerchief, and then hushing the child, who gave signs of waking, she laid it upon her bosom with its head on her shoulder, slung the bundle on her arm, arose, and struck into the wood.

A walk of half-a-mile brought her to a farmhouse just as the sun was rising.

Here she begged her breakfast, and ate it sitting upon a doorstep with the heavily sleeping child upon her knee.

She reserved a piece of bread for the poor babe, the innocent victim of her revenge.

As she was rising to leave the doorstep, the farmer's wife came to her with a little covered tin pail filled with milk, and put it into her hands saying:

"Take it along with you, my good woman, for the poor babe."

Norah thanked her charitable hostess, and arose to pursue her journey. It was strange, but perhaps natural, though scarce six hours had passed since the consummation of her long desired vengeance, her mind was already clearing off and settling. After taking leave of her benefactress she began to retrace her steps—for she had resolved upon her future course—she would return to her abandoned home, she would take the babe with her as the orphan of some dead relative left in her charge, and she would mature her account of it while on her journey. Therefore, she retraced her steps towards the city, being obliged to pass through it on her way home. But before Norah had proceeded a mile on her return journey, the poor babe awoke in earnest and would not be lulled to sleep again. And Norah sat down to give it the new milk, which the child drank eagerly.

Not till it had drunk its draught of milk and thereby satisfied its hunger and thirst, did the babe appear to notice the strange scenes around it—the strange nurse that held it.

Then it was with more surprise, wonder and curiosity than fear, her blue eyes wandered all about the scene, and then turned and fixed themselves steadily and inquiringly upon Norah's face.

That innocent, fearless gaze awoke Norah to the quick. She pressed its form gently, and offered it more milk.

But little Maud's eyes were looking down upon the strange, rough garment that wrapped her, and that fretted her tender flesh whenever it came in contact with it, and holding up one round pearly arm that was rubbed and reddened by it, she looked up in Norah's face confiding, and lisped:

"See."

For little Maud was naturally so intelligent and had been so talked to, taught and trained by her doting mother and young aunts, that she—a babe of ten months old—had several little words of her own.

Norah kissed the little arm, spoke gently to the child, and offered it milk; but the babe turned its little head away.

Norah gathered her things together, arose, and walked on, and the child, pleased with the locomotion and amused with the scene, was perfectly quiet.

That was a blessing, and far more than Norah had looked for. Soon they reached the suburbs of the city, but Norah determined not to pass through it until the babe should be asleep again. True, there was not one chance in ten thousand that the child should be recognized by any one they might meet, but still that ten thousandth fraction of a risk must not be run.

It was near noon now, and Norah turned aside, and took her way towards a market gardener's house, at a short distance. Here she requested the people to permit her to sit down and rest through the heat of the day, saying that she had walked a long way that morning.

And the old man and his two daughters, who seemed to constitute the family, kindly pressed her to come in and stay till after dinner, which, they said, would be ready by the time Peter returned from market.

While one of the daughters, whom they called Annie, was setting the table, and the other, named Jane, was dishing up the dinner, the inner door opened, and a young woman, dressed in coarse morning dress,

Instantly her eyes were fascinated to the beggar and the baby. She went up and stood and looked at them a little while, and seemed about to ask a question; but when little Maud smiled, and held out her arms, the young woman turned hastily away and burst into tears.

"She and Peter lost their only child about a week ago. It was about the age of this one, and I don't think they'll ever get reconciled to it," whispered Annie, passing near.

Norah had got the child to sleep, and covered its face with a handkerchief, and was about to resume her walk. She was stopped by one of the girls, and a whispered conversation took place between the women, during which the young woman in black tearfully insisted upon something that the girls should do, saying, as they left to perform her bidding.

"Only don't let me see them; I could not bear it."

And she went into an inner room.

The girls went upstairs, and soon returned with a bundle tied up, which they presented to the supposed beggar, saying:

"Here are some baby-clothes—everything that you want. They belonged to poor little Bud, and his mother will make us give them to you."

Norah thanked her. She was sincerely thankful to have some comfortable common clothing to put on the child, whose privations were troubling Norah's heart with compunction.

She even asked permission to retire apart and dress the child in one of the suits.

"Yes, you may do it; but you must not let Lily see you. Fear thing! you know it would hurt her!"

"Lily?"

"Lilian, little Bud's mother! You can go into our room if you want to dress the baby, and there is water there too, if you would like to wash it," said they, opening a side door and admitting Norah into the little sleeping-room of the girls.

Norah desired nothing better, and having completed the washing and dressing of the babe, and got the wearied little one again to sleep, came out, thanked and took leave of the kind family, and then settled the child more comfortably across her bosom, with its head upon her shoulder, gathered her bundle upon her arm, and set out upon her journey.

Norah desired nothing better, and having completed the washing and dressing of the babe, and got the wearied little one again to sleep, came out, thanked and took leave of the kind family, and then settled the child more comfortably across her bosom, with its head upon her shoulder, gathered her bundle upon her arm, and set out upon her journey.

Norah passed through the city safe from interruption that afternoon. The artillery was thundering at intervals over the water, she smiled sardonically as she passed through the city and gained the road that led to her own neighbourhood, determined to continue her journey by moonlight.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN that awful day—that day of darkest doom—was over, when the last sorrowful offices of love had been performed for the dead, and when all efforts to recover the living and the lost had failed and been abandoned, the youthful widow could remain no longer from her ill and orphaned boy.

On reaching the spot of which her husband had spoken so hopefully on the last dark day of his life, her grief burst forth with passionate violence. And nothing could have sustained her through this last trial but prayer and the religious consolation of her friends.

It was late in the evening when they reached Deepdale, the home of Ellen. It was a grey stone cottage, overgrown with moss and creeping vines, and overshadowed by high wooded hills. There was no cultivated ground near it, except a small garden with a few fruit trees enclosed by a low stone wall, moss-grown and covered with creepers, like the cottage. Old Marion, the nurse, stood watching at the cot-gate.

The old servant came forward to meet her, and the young widow burst into a flood of tears, and threw herself weeping into the arms of the faithful and affectionate creature.

That told the tale.

Ellen almost instantly disengaged herself, and, asking how the sick boy was, without waiting for the answer, rushed into the house to ascertain for herself.

"And where is the old mistress?" asked Marion, as she reassured the young baby.

"I do not know. She has been missing since the day of the execution. When I return to the city I shall prosecute the search for her. How is the sick child?"

"A good deal worse," said old Marion, heaving a deep sigh at these accumulated troubles.

The imminent danger of this child was of the greatest benefit to Ellen. It aroused her from the deep despair that might else have been fatal. It taught her by the fear of losing him how great the blessings were that still remained to bind her to life, to excite her to action.

The extreme illness of her boy lasted several days, and when the crisis of life and death was safely passed, and the child lived, Ellen experienced what she never thought to feel again, joy, gratitude and hope for the future. She wrote to her wealthy relatives, who had indeed disowned Ellen ever since her love marriage with poor William O'Donovan, but who, if they had hearts of flesh, must pity and succour her in her heavy misfortune.

An answer came—a hard, unchristian letter—the pith of which was a coarse and vulgar proverb, "As Ellen made her bed so she must lie upon it."

And this last disgrace of her husband's death for ever precluded the possibility of a recognition of her by her family. It was a letter to which there could be no possible answer.

"I have no claim upon them," said Ellen, quietly. "I chose for myself, and do not now—Heaven is my witness—repent my choice."

Her voice broke down in tears and sobs, and she wept convulsively.

"Willie was no murderer, though he died a murderer's death. Willie was good, and I had rather now be his poor widow than the wife of that rich man they wished me to marry. It is not that. But, oh! I will admit to you that there is something that tries my faith beyond all things, that tries, crushes, and almost destroys my faith."

"And what is that, my child?"

"Oh, it is to look around into the world and see how guilt thrives, how virtue suffers, to look around and see how selfishness, injustice, pride and cruelty prosper, increase, and enjoy, while the disinterested, the just, the merciful, and the humble fail, suffer, and lose."

One evening—the 17th of July—Ellen sat on her door-step soothing her still delicate boy to sleep, and herself soothed into peace by the beauty of the scene and the stillness of the evening. Suddenly a shadow fell upon her and she raised her eyes. Norah stood before her; with an exclamation of surprise and joy Ellen sprang up, put the boy down, and caught the wanderer in her arms, crying:

"Oh, mother, is it you? Oh, mother!"

And Ellen burst into tears. Norah did not return her embrace. She could not, her arms were locked tightly around something she carried on her bosom, but she said faintly:

"Ellen, let me come in and sit down, for I am nearly dead."

Ellen, with affectionate and anxious trepidation, pushed the door wide open, and drew forward the old-cushioned chair. Norah sank into it heavily, and



[GENTLE PITY.]

with a deep groan uncovered the sleeping child, and laid it on her knees.

Ellen drew near, gazed with surprise, curiosity, and tender interest, and then exclaimed, interrogatively:

"A baby, my mother! Why, where on earth did you get it from? Whose is it?"

But instead of answering these questions Norah only sighed and groaned, but presently said:

"Ellen, if you have a fan, give me one, for this poor little wretch is nearly suffocated with heat."

Ellen took down from the mantelpiece a spreading, and handed it to Norah, and while the latter was fanning the child Ellen knelt down by it to take a near view.

"Poor little thing! How pale it is, mother. Is it sick? Whose is it?"

"She is half famished, Ellen. Do call Marion, and tell her to bring some new milk for her."

"It is a girl, then? Whose child is it, mother?"

"Do go and do as I ask you, Ellen, then I will tell you."

"Mother, Marion has just this moment taken the pail and gone to milk Blossom. I can see her return from here, and when she comes I will tell you."

And now for the first time, the shawl having fallen, Ellen noticed the rags of her mother-in-law's attire.

"Yes, you may look, Ellen, but I have not slept under a roof for months."

"Mother!"

"It is true, Ellen! But it has not killed me, as you see! Nothing can kill me—that is the worst of it. I cannot catch cold—I cannot starve. I cannot weary myself to death. Ah, Ellen, a deathless grief is a deathless life."

"Mother!"

"And suicide is the only sin for which there is no repentance and no pardon."

"Mother! mother! You look wild and weary. Give me the child. Tea is almost ready; a cup of it will restore you. Go lie down until it is ready, mother, and when you have rested and have drunk it, I will bring you warm water and a change of clothes, then you can go to bed and sleep comfortably, and to-morrow you will be better."

"Comfortably! Better!" exclaimed the wretched woman, with a horrid laugh, which woke up little Maud, who started out of her little sleep with a cry of terror.

Poor babe! She had now been thirty-six hours in the hands of her captor, and already want, exposure, fatigue, improper food, occasional fits of grief

and terror, and longing for loving, familiar faces, had made the baby ill, and physical pain was added to all her other sufferings. And now she awoke again and looked around with an anxious, searching look; but no mother or nurse, or loving aunty appeared there to make her little perplexed and troubled heart jump for joy—all was strange and dreary. And she gazed at Ellen's gentle, pitying face, as if half expecting to recognise in her a familiar countenance; but a minute served to disappoint the little one in this, and she turned away with piteous, trembling lips, and bright tears standing on her cheeks.

Ellen held out her arms, and spoke gently and coaxingly to her. And the little one looked up to her face again with an inquiring, sorrowful, confidential smile.

"Poor little thing, come along," said Ellen. In an instant the child almost leaped into her extended arms. Ellen pressed her to her bosom, and softly caressed her.

"Minnie; know Minnie," persisted the child, pulling at Ellen as if to pull her along somewhere.

Ellen still caressed and coaxed, and tried to soothe the child; but little Maud began to sob in piteous tones.

"Minnie! Minnie!" At last a bright thought struck Ellen. She went to her nursing chair, sat down in it, bared her bosom, and placed little Maud to her breast. But this action seemed to wake a host of tender, loving memories in the infant's heart, for, with both hands, she pushed away the offered breast, and burst into a wild passion of tears, crying:

"Minnie! Minnie!"

Ellen turned very pale with pity. She sought in every way to comfort the child, without success.

"Minnie! Minnie! my Minnie!" was still her piteous wail.

At last Ellen walked rapidly up to where Norah sat still and asked:

"Who is her mother? Has she got one? Where is she? What can we do for her? for indeed her cries almost break my heart?"

"Her mother and father are both dead! They died with the fever that broke out on the ship in which they sailed for England. They left no other children—only this baby, and I took it to save it from the poor-house," said Norah.

As Ellen still looked astonished and wondering, she added, indignantly:

"I wasn't going to let my nephew's child go to the

poor-house? You would not expect me to do such a thing, would you?"

"No; surely not! "Hush! hush! my darling baby! You shall go to your Minnie by-and-bye!"

"Well, Sidney Somers was my nephew. You have heard me talk about Sidney Somers?"

"Yes! No! I don't know!"

"Oh, yes, you have; you forgot. Well, Sidney Somers, poor fellow, with his wife and child, were coming over to this country, they took the fever and died, and when the ship arrived I took the child to keep it off the parish, as I said. Another time I will tell you more about it. I am too tired now. There comes the old woman with the milk?"

Norah, who felt no remorse for the theft of the child, experienced a pang of wounded pride in feeling herself forced to invent a falsehood to conceal that theft.

Days passed, during which little Maud, infant-like, at intervals suffered herself to be amused, and then remembered and moaned for her mother.

But at the end of the week the vision had faded in the baby's memory, and in another week Ellen had won her love entirely to herself.

From this time the child's vigorous organization rebounded into fine health.

The time drew near when Ellen was to leave her sylvan home.

Ellen spoke of it to her mother-in-law.

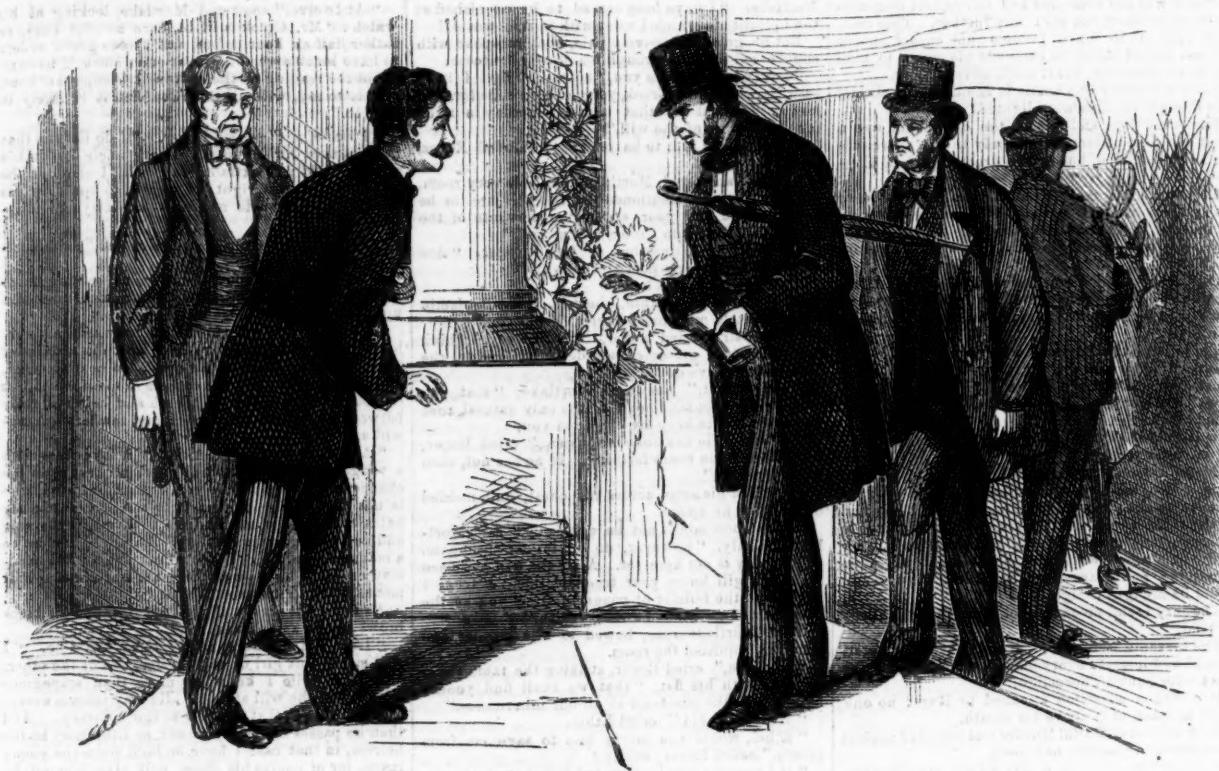
But Norah was totally passive and indifferent. She seemed to have lost all care for all things in life. Her looks and manner gave Ellen great anxiety. The wretched woman would sometimes sit for the whole day without speaking or eating, and when night came, instead of going to bed, wander forth into the wood, and be absent till morning.

Ellen at last noticed, with startling terror, that these eccentric habits always recurred upon the change of the moon, increasing in erraticism towards its full and abating with its wane. The poor young widow could no longer doubt that her wretched mother was a lunatic.

Toil and privation are long in doing their work, and so three years of wretched penury passed away before Ellen's health and strength utterly failed.

It was the year that the great pestilence broke out in the city. That autumn found Ellen herself in an infirmary, her children in the orphan asylum, her mother-in-law in the lunatic hospital, poor Marion in the almshouse.

(To be Continued.)



THE MISER'S HEIR.

CHAPTER XXI.

The soul of Nature tranquill lies,
Low moaning in her sleep of love and hate;
Her breathing fraught with mysteries,
Which cause our hearts cords to vibrate.

"Roger," Ethel said, "wake up." He started up, broad awake in an instant, and stared amazed at seeing his sister in her dressing-gown by his bedside, looking as pale and scared as if she had seen a vision. "What is the matter?" he asked, wildly. "I was dreaming, such a dream. I thought that I had broken into Uncle Martin's safe, and was carrying away a case full of pearls, and a bag full of gold coins. I was rushing along a narrow path in a dense forest. They had set bloodhounds upon my track; I could hear their savage howls in the distance, and I knew that if they once came up with me I should be torn limb from limb. I would not put down my load, and the weight kept me from running fast as I wished to run. It seemed night, for I could see glimpses of the moon now and then through the boughs of the trees as I hurried along; presently I came to an old stone house. The forest seemed to have been cleared just around it for the space of twenty yards or so. There was a wall about it, broken down in many places, and overgrown with moss. The windows were small diamond-paned casements, with heavy stone mullions. The door hung on its hinges, I thought I would go into the house, and take refuge from the bloodhounds.

"I pushed to the door, but it would not fasten, there was neither lock nor bolt, so I rushed along a passage and up a staircase. I climbed this staircase, and while I was doing so, I heard the bell toll. The moon looked in at a broken window, on the side, and I saw a figure shrouded in black descending towards me. We met by the window, the figure and myself. It raised its veil, and I saw your face, and you said to me: 'Roger, Uncle Martin is married to Esther Farnell.' I burst out laughing, and the bell tolled again, and I awoke. What an odd dream."

"It was very odd," said Ethel. "Roger, Uncle Martin is dead."

Roger started up in the bed.

[THE ARRIVAL OF LAWYER CROOK.]

"Somebody has broken into his room, stolen his key, and opened his chest, where he kept such a quantity of money and jewels. The banknotes are left, but all the gold coins and jewels are gone; and the murderer struck Uncle Martin a frightful blow across the forehead, which laid his skull open. He has been dead some hours."

Roger sprang out of bed, and began to hurry on his clothes.

"I must go for Dr. Kennedy," he said, "we must call in the police."

"Roger," said Ethel, sadly, "all that has been done long ago. The doctor has made his examination and written a certificate; the police are in possession of the room, everything is sealed up. Mr. Mortlake took command over everything. I wondered that the noise of the voices did not bring you to the landing place where we were all assembled. No one asked for you, it seemed that nobody missed you. I thought of you all the while. Oh! Roger, I had a dreadful thought."

"What!" he asked, turning towards her wildly; "you thought that I, because I have often said I wished that I had some of those diamonds on the counter between me and some dealer in precious stones at Amsterdam, and that if I once had five thousand pounds of my own, and was clear of debt, I should count myself lucky—you fancied that I had murder in my thoughts. Never! never! so help me Heaven!"

"I believe you," said Ethel, forgive me, Roger that I had such thoughts. And she went up to Roger, and embraced him.

He hurried out of the room, and went downstairs to the dining-room, where Mortlake and the doctor were still discussing the terrible event which had just transpired, over their cigars and brandy; Roger rushed in.

"Why was I not called up?" he exclaimed, "it was left to my sister to come to me and tell me all this."

"We forgot you," said Mortlake, speaking in some confusion.

"It was a strange time to forget me," answered Roger, bitterly. "I, who am the nephew of the murdered man, and the rightful heir to all his great possessions!"

He spoke the last words with a scornful boldness, and looked defiantly at Mortlake.

Roger knew not what to think respecting his uncle's will, and the strange influence Mortlake had appeared to possess over him for the last week or

so. It was just possible that the millionaire had persuaded the strange old man to alter the will in his favour, and Roger's quick fancy suggested to him that he might find the whole of the family property in the possession of this strange person, all that great wealth for which he had waited, and to which he had been considered as the heir for as long as he could remember, and then Mortlake would assuredly renew his suit to Ethel.

Ethel would as certainly refuse, and brother and sister would be turned out to struggle with the world. Roger himself, loaded with debt as he was, and completely in the power of Mortlake, might even chance to spend the best years of his life in a prison. These thoughts chased each other through his mind, while he was maintaining a bold front, and talking largely about his rights of heirship.

"I am sorry that we should have overlooked you, Mr. Roger Thorncliffe," said Mortlake. "But the occasion was so very dreadful, and our anxiety to catch the culprit so great. For my part, I hardly noticed that you were not in the crowd."

"Complimentary," sneered Roger, bitterly. "You ignore me, and speak of me as though I were one of the servants of the household. You forgot that Squire Thorncliffe was my uncle, and that I am his rightful heir."

At the word heir, Mortlake shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can say that, Mr. Roger," he asked. "Your uncle was one of the most eccentric men in England. And who has chosen for his heir will not be known until his will is read. It is not at all improbable that he has left it to the Queen, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, or to Mr. Gladstone. He may have willed it all away to churches, or hospitals, or to the fund for reducing the National Debt. You may find that some one individual has inherited it all. Miss Melville, your sister's governess, for instance, or perhaps old Spinette, the housekeeper."

Roger watched Mortlake intently while he was speaking these cutting words.

He was trying to discover by this singular man's countenance whether, in truth, he was in the secret of the miser's will.

The dark face of Mortlake was perfectly expressionless. He looked with a stony abstraction towards the frost-laden trees of the shrubbery. There seemed to be neither contempt, anger, nor kindness, in his tones.

It was impossible to tell whether he knew everything or nothing.

Roger was too conceited and self-reliant to condescend to question this man any further. This man, who seemed to have become his enemy simply because he had failed to persuade his sister to give her hand where her heart could never follow.

After this there was bustle in the house, breakfast was brought in, fires were lighted.

For many days and weeks the old manor was a great centre of attraction, not only to the surrounding neighbourhood, but to the greater part of England.

The mysterious murder and the vast robbery were the subjects of much newspaper writings—of huge excitement, and vague speculation.

Mystery and murder are always subjects of morbid interest.

Ethel hardly knew how the weeks went by. Afterwards she always remembered that terrible time, as one remembers a fearful dream, or the wild fancies of a fever.

There was the inquest, with herself and Roger examined as witnesses, together with the whole household; old Spinetti made a speech to the jury in which she indulged in her favourite vein, and thundered forth her prophecies to those assembled, who listened half awe-stricken, half amused, to her impassioned ravings.

She told them that the murderer would soon hang himself with his own rope; that it was no use for them to be keen and vigilant, she had been keen and vigilant for twenty-two years, and it had led to nothing; they must all have patience. In a very short time there would be no need for any more wandering and marvelling, for the hidden secret would be brought to light.

The jury found no excuse for committing anybody for trial.

The servants were all of unblemished character, faithful and honest; everyone of them had lived for Years with Squire Thorncliffe.

If a vague suspicion attached to Roger no one dared to speak of it above his breath.

So a verdict of Wilful Murder was returned against some person or persons unknown.

A watch was set upon nearly all the pawnbrokers' shops in the kingdom, and a full description was taken of the missing jewels.

A list of them was given in all the leading newspapers; but notwithstanding that all Scotland Yard was upon the qui vive, it could not be detected or discovered in any way that a single article had been offered for sale or a gold coin tendered in exchange. After the inquest there was the funeral, attended by half the county, and then there was a dinner served to about twenty guests, and all through this time the person who took the management of everything was the dark-faced Mortlake. He was excessively gentle and subdued in his manner, but he ruled despotically notwithstanding. It was like a hand of iron gloved in velvet. Roger and Ethel both offered some protest against his interference. He met them always with the same bland, calm smile.

"I am only doing what I know your uncle would have wished," he said. "Surely you do not think that I wish to rob you of your inheritance? I assure you I have more money than I know what to do with. It is not money that I want to make me happy, and then he would sigh and look at Ethel in a manner which she felt to be perfectly odious.

"Wait," he would say, gently, "your uncle's will has not been read yet, and you do not know in what position you stand. Of course you will remain here until that time. Afterwards it is impossible to say what may happen."

This was the day after the funeral.

Mortlake had met the two young Thorncliffes at breakfast, and after the meal was over Roger began to expostulate with the unbidden guest.

"I am aware, sir," said Mortlake, "that my presence here is odious to you, and likewise to your sister. Is it not so?"

He glanced over at Ethel, who in her deep mourning dress, sat sorrowfully near the window. She was looking out upon the wintry landscape. A tear trembled upon her long eyelash. She did not speak, and Mortlake repeated his question.

"Is not my presence here odious to you, Miss Thorncliffe?"

Then she looked up at him, and said, frankly:

"Sir, you have assumed the reins of authority here. You have ordered everything connected with the inquest and the funeral, and even the estate; you do not allow my brother a voice in the matter—you tell him he is nothing until the will is read, and up to that time you mean to be master here. Can you wonder that we are both impatient to see the end of all this mystery, and to know in what position we both of us stand?"

"I wonder at nothing, Miss Thorncliffe," rejoined

Mortlake. "I have long ceased to be astonished at the ingratitudo which I meet with in this world."

But he grew excessively pale, and he spoke with suppressed passion through his closely-set teeth.

"I may just hint to you," he said, "that I have seen Mr. Benjamin Crook, your uncle's solicitor, and he has informed me that next Wednesday is fixed for the reading of the will."

"And where is it to be read?" demanded Roger, eagerly.

"Here," answered Mortlake, "in this very room. All the persons mentioned in the will are to be present—you and your sister, the servants of the house, Mr. Benjamin Crook, and myself."

"May I ask one question, sir?" said Roger. "Are you aware of the purport of the will?"

Mortlake shook his head.

"Not more than you are," he said. "Mr. Benjamin Crook has told me what I have now told you."

"Then, sir!" cried Roger, "I must say, I think that you have presumed wonderfully, ruling the roost as you have done."

"You forget," answered Mortlake, "that you owe me five thousand pounds, it is only natural that I should wish to keep my eye upon you."

"If my uncle has done me justice," cried Roger, "I will pay you every farthing. If he has not, then do your worst."

He folded his arms across his chest, and nodded defiantly as he spoke.

"The worst might not be agreeable," said Mortlake, calmly, "however, do not let us anticipate. Wednesday is not here yet. After the will has been read, you will know your true position. I trust I may have the felicity of congratulating you as the possessor of your uncle's vast wealth."

Then Mortlake rose, bowed to the brother and sister, and quitted the room.

"I believe," cried Roger, striking the table vehemently with his fist, "that we shall find yonder hypocrite is the possessor of all our inheritance."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Ethel.

"Ethel, would you marry him to save me from prison," asked Roger, wildly?

"If I married him," answered Ethel, "the horror and abhorrence I have for him, would turn my brain."

"Then you will not marry him. Ethel, I think I shall leave England this very night."

She came and put her hand upon his shoulder.

"Wait until the will is read," she said. "Wednesday will soon be here."

Roger consented.

The days passed on monotonously until Wednesday morning broke over Greywold.

A bright, mild day in January, one of those days in the treacherous English winter which promises so fairly that the spring is close at hand. Roger tossed a bunch of violets and early violets through the open window to his sister, who was presiding over the breakfast table.

"Keep up your heart, Ethel," he said, "we shall know the best and the worst to-day."

Mortlake, the unbidden guest, entered the room at that instant, he bowed deferentially, as was his wont, to Ethel Thorncliffe.

Roger raised his cap half ironically to the man who seemed to hold such sway over his fortunes.

Nonchalant Roger never could learn to be subservient to those in power.

For ought he knew to the contrary Mr. Mortlake might before night prove to be the real owner of Greywold, and he might find himself an absolute beggar; and far worse than a beggar because he was loaded with debts, and even owed a fearful sum to this persistent, calm, remorseless man, who seemed to live but for one object, that of winning to himself an unwilling bride.

The three sat down to breakfast.

Roger had not changed colour in the least, only his lip quivered now and then.

Ethel was pale, but there was no flashing of the deep blue eyes; no inward emotion caused the exquisite lips to tremble, she was calm, fair, dignified as a statue of marble chiselled by some master of the plastic art.

She was like a living, breathing type of Purity, Charity, Patience, or Religion.

No Madonna of Raphael nor Giorgione was ever lovelier than Ethel Thorncliffe with the holy calm in the lustrous eyes; the long lashes sweeping the rounded cheek.

Breakfast passed almost in silence. Roger talked gaily of the weather, the hunting season, the London season, anything and everything, rather than the one subject that engrossed his thoughts, at last he said, in rising from the table:

"May I ask at what time this will is to be read, Mr. Mortlake?"

"At twelve," answered Mortlake, looking at his watch; "Mr. Crook will be here at that time, or rather half an hour before, and I have given orders to have lunch spread for us at one o'clock. I have no doubt the reading of the will will occupy an hour, that is to say, with all the discussion it is likely to lead to."

"Discussion!" echoed Roger. "I do not see that there is need for the least. If my uncle has made any very odd and extraordinary will, I shall, as the next hour, have a right, of course, to question his sanity. I shall waste no words on lawyers and tortoises."

"You will do as you please, of course," said Mortlake, with his cold smile.

Then he walked out of the room, casting as he went one look pregnant with an extreme of adoration upon Ethel.

He took a cigar and found his way to the shrubbery. There he walked up and down in a secluded path, his arms folded on his chest, his head lowered, an odd smile touching the corners of his lips. At last he took his cigar from his mouth and held it lightly between his thumb and fore-finger, muttering meanwhile.

"A deep game this," he said. "A love chase with a vengeance. My whole life and soul set upon the chance of winning to wife yonder marble statue, who is not only coldly indifferent to me, but absolutely hates me, loathes me, shuns from me, turns cold and hot when I approach her. Haugh! I must be a madman or a fool. I know not which; but madman or fool I have sworn to make her mine. Fair means first and foul means after."

And now the cruel smile left his lips, and his black brows met in an anxious scowl.

"Love and hate are nearly alike," said he. "I will marry this girl or murder her, one or the other, and meanwhile I know no more than escapegrace Roger how the will stands. He may inherit everything forught that I know to the contrary. And then he passes out of my power, or Ethel may be the heiress, in that case I have no hold upon the young rascal, for of course his sister will give him all he asks for, divide her fortune with him most likely, and I shall be politely told to leave Greywold; but even in that case I will marry Ethel Thorncliffe. Yes, even if she is proved to be the greatest heiress in England; even if she discovers that we have played her false with her lover Harold. If she becomes his promised bride, if all goes merrily as a marriage bell, yet will I hear her away from her troops of friends and flatterers, from her gilded fortunes, from the longing arms of her expectant lover."

Soon after this the rumbling of wheels was heard in the broad drive.

Ben Crook, the lawyer, had come to read the will of the miser.

Gentleman, Mortlake hastened into the house, and was just in time to bid the new comer welcome. Mr. Crook walked into the dining-room, followed by his clerk, who had come as a witness.

Ben Crook was a small, wiry man, somewhat high shouldered, with large ears, long arms, a sort of ape-like countenance; wonderfully ugly was this prosperous old country lawyer, whose head, the country folks said, was crammed so full of other people's dreadful secrets, that they looked out of his eyes, and frightened timid women.

Strange eyes they were, so close together as to give him the appearance, almost, of squinting, deep set in the head, of a reddish brown hue, and guiltless of eyelash or eyebrow.

His face was mahogany-coloured, his mouth was a mere slit, which parted when he spoke, for he seemed to have no lips; his nose was a little turned up ludicrous feature, at which boys in the street made mockery, his hair long, straight, and sandy, hung about his large ears, and down upon the collar of his shabby coat.

As for his dress, he wore a brown suit, which was almost threadbare, his waistcoat was buttoned up, so that if he ever donned a white shirt it was not seen; but there is good reason to believe that Ben was too economical to wear clothes which required the expense of a laundress.

He took snuff with his left hand, while he offered his right to Mortlake.

"Glad to see you, fine day, fine day," piped he, in his high shrill voice. "Where's the young man? where's the young lady? Ah, I see, there they come, and please have old Daniel and Miss Spinetti in, they are both mentioned in the will, and a Frenchwoman, named Marie Frenchard, and a lady, Miss Melville."

"Miss Melville is in Scotland," said Mortlake.

"All right, all right," said Mr. Crook, "will you be good enough to stand proxy for her?"

"Certainly."

It was a solemn, strange sight, the preparations for the reading of that within the old dining-room. The servants were ranged on one side, on the other sat Mortlake, and the doctor and rector of the village, who had been called in as witnesses.

Ethel had taken up her position in her favourite armchair by the window; she sat with her arms folded in her lap, and her eyes cast down. Roger leaned in his usual nonchalant fashion against the mantelpiece, one foot idly twisted round the ankle of the other; he turned his back upon Ben Crook, upon the doctor, the rector, the whole assembly.

Ben Crook sat before the large dining-table, his clerk placed the will in front of him, and then stood behind his chair.

The old lawyer glanced sharply at all the faces about him, put his thumb to his mouth, and then lit the first leaf of the squire's will.

"In the name of Heaven, amen."

"I, Martin Thornecliffe, being in my right mind, do hereby give and bequeath my property in the funds, amounting to five hundred thousand pounds, my estate, called Yatten, in the county of York, and my estate called Greywold, in the county of Hereford, in trust to my friend and lawyer, Benjamin Crook, to have and to hold, from the date of my death, for the space of one year; at the end of that time, I leave it unreserved to the persons herein-after named. First, to my great nephew, Roger Thornecliffe, I give and bequeath all my money in the English Funds, amounting to five hundred thousand pounds, and also my estate of Greywold, in the county of Hereford, which belonged in the first instance, to his grandfather, my brother. It is meet, and right, and just, that the estate should so descend to the lad."

Roger's large, black eyes sparkled with what seemed like liquid fire, he smiled, and his smile made his beauty almost unearthly, not that there was any element of the divine in the countenance of Roger Thornecliffe, it was rather the face of a heathen god, bright, dazzling, grand, untouched by gentleness, unaffected by love or pity, or any saint-like ecstasy. He looked at Mortlake, flashed upon him, as it were, a glance full of proud triumph.

Mortlake, meanwhile, had become of a leaden hue, his eyes drooped, he compressed his lips, and he muttered to himself something which sounded in the ears of the doctor, who was near to him, very like a moan.

Mr. Ben Crook first cast his eyes upon Roger, next upon Mortlake, he smiled an ugly, cunning smile, then he went on again with the reading of the will.

"But I do not purpose that my nephew, Roger, should inherit this fortune without deserving it, and in my opinion he does not deserve it at present!"

Ben Crook paused again, his ugly smile grew uglier. Mortlake turned crimson and purple with surprise, the colour and beauty faded out of the face of Roger, a murmur of astonishment ran like a shiver through the little crowd assembled.

Ben Crook continued:

"My nephew must apply at once for a situation in a merchant's or lawyer's office, he must live for the space of two years upon his earnings, he must not borrow a shilling, or contract one debt, during that time. Should he borrow a shilling, or procure goods on credit, he will forfeit all claim to the monies and estate above-mentioned."

Again Ben Crook paused. Roger's face was now flushed, his eyes flashed, he clenched his hand, and seemed on the point of speaking, when Ethel signed to him to have patience, and he submitted to her look of entreaty.

"I leave my friend, Benjamin Crook, executor of my will and guardian over my nephew and niece. He is keen and clever enough to keep a sharp look out upon Roger. He will set those to watch who will know whether my nephew borrows or gets into debt; and the smallest debt—even amounting to five shillings—shall and will cause his complete disinheritance. Should my nephew, Roger, ingratiate himself with any friends by telling them of his expected fortune, and they should invite him to visit and spend his time idly, and should he live in idleness under their roof, or otherwise, he is also to lose the fortune above-named. It is to be distinctly understood that he is to work, and live by the labour of his hands, and keep clear of debt. If he become seriously ill, he shall be excused. Two medical certificates only are to be accepted, the two medical men hereinbefore named, as proof of that fact. I make this provision because I am aware that there are doctors to be found who would pander to the whims and idleness of a rich young man. The two doctors are, Dr. Crosby, of Bedlam Square, London, and Dr. Kennedy, of Greywold, in the county of Hereford."

"So you see there is no way of escape for you, Mr.

Thornecliffe," said the old lawyer, with a grin. You can't cheat if you are well. You must work and earn your bread for two years, and then you will be one of the richest men in the kingdom."

"I am not in the least dissatisfied with the conditions imposed by my uncle," said Roger, speaking haughtily; he had become very white, but he smiled a smile of triumph upon Mortlake. "Such a discipline as that named in the will will teach me how to take care of my money when I come into it, and to keep out of the way of lawyers and sharpers."

Old Ben Crook chuckled at this, as if it handsomely Roger had paid him a compliment instead of conveying an insult. He rubbed his hands together.

"I think," said he, "that your good uncle would have altered this will, sir, if he had lived; in any case, had you married Miss Parsell he would at once have altered it in your favour. And had he discovered that you were desperately in debt he would have altered it to your cost. Yes, that he would."

"He meant to do so," said Mortlake, venomously, "the night before he was murdered."

There was a certain meaning conveyed in these words, which sent a shudder through the heiress. Roger, white as ashes, stood upright now, and glared upon those assembled.

Ben Crook then continued:

"If my nephew has already contracted any debts, and the creditors be willing to wait, it is a proof they have faith in his honour, but if the persecutions of law prevent him from working, and he be thrown into prison, it is a proof that he has so conducted himself that they have no faith in his honour. In that case, also, will he forfeit the fortune before-mentioned."

"So that you see you have no chance unless you make friends of your creditors," chuckled Ben Crook, rubbing his hands again.

Mortlake now looked another man, his eyes glittered, his hands caught up a paper knife and played with the toy, unconsciously, his pallor gave place to a warm tint, which made him less plain than usual, he looked first at Roger and next at Ethel, with a glance which seemed to say:

"You are mine, both of you. You are like birds caught in a net. Obey me and be happy. Baulk me, and Roger ends his days in prison."

Ben Crook continued to read aloud:

"To my niece, Ethel Thornecliffe, I leave the sum of two hundred thousand pounds, now invested in various ways. Consols, bonds, banks and stocks, to be named hereafter. I leave her a set of emeralds, set in twenty-carat gold. A short gold chain, and cross of diamonds. A long gold chain, and gold lever watch. A great heart-shaped, ruby brooch, pierced by a golden arrow, sewn over with brilliants, all these jewels are in the great chest in my bed-chamber. But my niece, Ethel, is not to touch one of these things, or to inherit one shilling of the fortune for the space of two years from the date of my death, because she would surely assist her brother in idleness, if it lay in her power. For two years she is to board at a certain house with a certain Mrs. Anson, who conducts a select boarding-house for ladies only in the little seaport town of Seaton, in Devonshire. Ben Crook will pay this lady eighty pounds per annum for the board of my niece, and allow my niece twenty pounds a year for her own use. She will require all that for her clothes and pocket-money."

"I leave the whole of the jewels remaining in that chest, and the twenty thousand pounds that will remain after deducting the forty thousand for my niece, to Benjamin Crook, in trust, for the building of a hospital in the outskirts of London, for the comfort of convalescent patients."

The will went on to state that the squire desired to leave handsome legacies to those who had served him faithfully.

All the servants and Miss Melville received bequests varying in value, some to the extent of two thousand pounds, but not one of these were to touch their legacies until the expiration of the two years.

When Benjamin Crook came to the end of the will, he looked round upon the faces of all those assembled with a keen smile. He rubbed his hands vigorously together; he seemed to relish excessively the sight of the various emotions which agitated the hearers. To the doctor a handsome legacy was bequeathed. He looked radiant with satisfaction, quite in the mood to preach patience and contentment to other people.

The rector was remembered to the extent of one hundred pounds and a gold watch, and he seemed quietly pleased in his way.

All the servants were quite delighted at the munificence of the legacies which fell to their share; but

they were not unreasonably annoyed at the long delay which separated them from their good fortune. Ethel looked anxiously at her brother, the brother and Mortlake glared at each other with cold faces. Disfiance was in the countenance of Roger. A set purpose was manifest on that of Mortlake.

"I have no right to give advice," observed old Benjamin, rising and folding up his various papers and parchments, "but I would gently hint to Master Roger, yonder, the advisability of getting quickly into employment, and I think I can recommend him to a situation in a certain lawyer's office in the city, where, for old acquaintance sake, they will oblige me by giving the young gentleman the employment of copying clerk, at a salary of one hundred per annum; handsome wages, those sir, for a young man unused to work. You could live on it very well, and have good board and lodging, necessary clothing, and plenty of pocket money. I assure you when you have once earned your dinner you'll eat it with double the appetite."

"You mean kindly, Mr. Crook, I am sure you do," cried Roger, advancing towards the singular old man, and clasping his hand in both of his own, "but how am I to comply with the conditions of my uncle's will, unless those creditors to whom I owe such large sums of money will let me rest? If they prosecute me, my mind will become so distracted that I shall not be able to do my duty."

"It is fortunate for you in one sense," remarked the lawyer, "that your poor uncle's death was so sudden, or he would assuredly have altered his will and disinherited you entirely, since, as I understand, the knowledge of these liabilities came at last to his ears; but, as it is, although your creditors may give you trouble at first, not one of them, I feel confident, will annoy you after once I have explained the affair to them, for, of course, if you were thrown into prison for instance, and were not able to work and support yourself as the will dictates, you would never inherit a farthing, and your creditors would lose everything—certainly they will let you alone."

Roger now motioned to the servants to withdraw, and shortly afterwards a light lunch was served up. When this repast was ended, the doctor and rector took their leave, and Benjamin Crook, Mortlake, and the two Thornecliffes found themselves together.

(To be Continued.)

TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

The ordinary friendship of to-day, in common with almost every community, is largely adulterated. Somehow it seems to partake of the nature of the age in more respects than one.

The average grade of friendship is of the cheapest kind—made of poor material, and sold at any price. The social market is glutted with it, and it resembles so closely the genuine article that the keen-eyed expert can alone detect the fraud. This, of course, is speaking figuratively.

But the fact that there is much false friendship does not prove that there is none of the genuine article in existence—it is only an evidence that the latter is rather scarce.

Some writer has said, "There is little friendship in the world," and we are half inclined to substantiate the assertion. Those whom we believe to be our most reliable friends often prove our bitterest enemies, and we are frequently at a loss to know in whom to confide, and doubtful as to who are our friends.

Friendship is defined as an attachment to a person proceeding from an intimate acquaintance. Now, it is plain that if friendship is the natural outgrowth of an intimate acquaintance, it must necessarily partake of the nature of the acquaintanceship.

If our relations one to another are of a pure and honest character, if truth and integrity and virtue are the controlling elements in all our comminglings with each other—then our friendship will be of a pure type, and tend to elevate and benefit us.

But if there is an absence of those elements—if the principles of true manhood and womanhood do not enter into and control our relations to each other, if falsehood and deceit are practised—then the friendship will be cheap and flimsy—false and uncertain.

In the first place, there can be no true friendship without confidence, and no confidence without honour and integrity. These are the wool and web in the genuine article.

Hypocrisy and pretence form no part in its make-up—they are too cheap and flimsy to wear well, and the honest man will dispense with them altogether.

Men are too apt to use this false friendship as a cloak to hide their wicked deeds and purposes. But it is so gaudy that discerning people can see through,

and discover the falsehood and wickedness beneath.

The underlying force of all proper social intercourse is friendship in its highest and noblest. The Creator has implanted within the human soul a desire for social communion. It is the noblest human attribute, and, properly used, the most benevolent. But how little it is understood! How its cultivation and development in a higher sense is neglected! In this grasping, greedy world, its beauty is overlooked, its power is lost, its blessings unheeded, in our race after worldly treasures and pleasures and their unsatisfying results.

A true friend is of incalculable value. With true friendship there is that peace and harmony that surpasses all definition. Complete and well rounded, it is more beautiful than imagination could portray. Developed and intensified, it blossoms into that finer and more heavenly grace called love.

Properly exercised, it lifts all men into a higher life—fills them with nobler impulses and desires—refines the mind and softens the heart—purifies and beautifies the actions of men; in short, it makes men more manly, and woman more womanly, and adds beauty and harmony and happiness to our lives.

It is in the heart. Here it is born, and here it dwells for ever, strengthening or weakening, and determining for good or evil our influence on our fellow-beings in proportion as it is developed in the right or the wrong channel.

It is born of Heaven, and is linked in nature to Him who was the friend of friends—who died that a flourishing world might live. It is the fountain-head of love, and the germ of every noble impulse and feeling in man.

B. W. B.

THE DIAMOND BRACELET.

CHAPTER LII.

LORD TREGARON bestowed long and anxious thought upon the disposition and welfare of Maya. The girl had developed such hideous traits of falsehood, treachery, and baseness, that he began to experience a sense of repugnance to her that frightened him.

Her pink and white prettiness, her purring ways, her softness, and her sinuous grace, had grown to him as repulsive as the glitter and beauty and grace of a snake. He was horrified at his own growing aversion to her; he blamed himself severely; and recalled the fact that she had been brought up in India at a native court, as an apology or excuse for a want of principle.

And then he remembered that Sinda had been brought up at that same court, and that Sinda was frank and nobleness itself.

He remembered, too, that that court had been Christian and not heathen, and that the old Begum had been a convert to Christianity, and that the martyred missionary, Mr. Hudspeth, had been of gentle birth, had been an English university graduate, and that he had been the tutor and guardian of both Sinda and Maya.

It was impossible to avoid the conclusion that the girl's nature was originally bad and coarse, and that the fault was in that and not in the education or training she had received.

"And yet," he thought, sorrowfully, "Agnes was wont to boast of the frankness and truthfulness of the child. She used to tell me that our little Katharine possessed a rare nobility of soul, and she often predicted that her womanhood would be as glorious and perfect as her childhood was tender and sweet. And this is the child of my sainted Agnes—this girl whose duplicity and meanness of nature must have been born in her, and lain undeveloped during those early years!"

He was thinking thus upon the morning subsequent to his announcement to Maya of his resolve to send her to a boarding-school.

He was seated at a desk in the library, and had just completed a letter to Mr. Sharp, requesting him to find such a school as he desired, when the door opened, and Maya, in a white morning costume of peculiar airiness, came into his presence.

He regarded her gravely, his sad, stern face not lighting up at her approach.

She drew up a hassock and sat down at his knee, seizing and caressing his hand, and looking up at him with a fawning expression that indicated a selfish errand.

"I see that you've been writing a letter, papa," she exclaimed. "Is it to your lawyer?"

"I have been writing to Mr. Sharp—yes."

"And about a boarding-school for me?"

The earl assented.

"I thought so. And I've come in to make a bargain with you, papa," cried Maya, vivaciously. "I know that you are not quite satisfied with me. Now I'll agree to be and do whatever you wish if you'll destroy that odious letter, and say nothing more about a boarding-school."

"I can make no bargain with you, Katharine," said Lord Tregaron, coldly. "I do not send you from me under a momentary displeasure, but from a deep-seated conviction that it is my duty to provide you with a woman's tender care and training."

"But you will change your mind, papa?"

"I cannot, as I cannot change my convictions of duty."

The girl frowned darkly, and her slipped foot large and flat, as his lordship noticed, beat a tatoo upon the carpet.

"I would prefer a governess," she said, with a point. "I didn't leave India to be put in a school like a child. Can't you find me a governess?"

"I think a school, with the companion of other young ladies, preferable," said the earl. "It will give you sisters—"

"If you think I need a companion of my own age, send for Sinda," interrupted Maya. "I hate her, to be sure, but I prefer Sinda and freedom to school. I'll copy Sinda, if you insist upon it, but I won't go to school! You think so much of Sinda that I'm sure that you can't say no to this proposition."

The earl was thoughtful.

He admired and loved Sinda with a strange tenderness and yearning.

To have her again under his roof would be a great joy to him.

It seemed probable that Sinda would have more influence over the wayward Maya than anyone else could have.

Sinda would probably be willing to leave Mrs. Biggs upon a proper representation of the case, and he yielded assent to Maya's proposition in these words:

"I will lay aside my letter to Mr. Sharp for the present, and I will write to Sinda, asking her to come here as your friend and sister. If she will come to us, I will adopt her as my daughter, so that she may feel herself your social equal, and her companionship I hope you will improve, and be more what I wish you to be."

The girl made a grimace behind her lace pocket-handkerchief, but bowed her head in acquiescence to his lordship's remark.

He wrote his letter to Sinda without further delay, inviting her to come to Belle Isle as his adopted daughter and Maya's sister.

He expressed a conviction that, if Sinda would assent to his proposition, he could arrange matters satisfactorily with Mrs. Biggs, and desired to hear from her at her earliest convenience.

He read the letter to Maya, sealed and addressed it, and despatched it to the post by a special messenger.

"We shall probably hear from Miss Sinda the day after to-morrow," the earl remarked. "I think she will come this week!"

"I am sure she will. Sinda is refined, and that horrible Mrs. Biggs is enough to drive her distracted," said Maya. "I know that I would rather die than be under the control of that wretched old creature! So, it's all settled!" added the girl, gaily. "I'm to stay at home and Sinda's to share my home with me. Well, that's better than boarding-school, I suppose!"

She rose up and moved towards the door, all smiles and brightness.

A more mercenary and calculating person could scarcely be found than pretty Maya, and inwardly she was convulsed with bitterness at the prospect of sharing her position and fortune with Sinda.

She concealed her anger cleverly, however, and beat a retreat to her own room, where she brooded over what she deemed her wrongs in sullen silence, and pondered upon the question how she might best right them.

She had no one to consult or to afflict with her murmurings, Wolsey Bathurst having gone to Lostwithiel to stay a day or so.

At least such was his pretence, but Maya knew quite well that he had gone up to London upon a secret and nefarious errand to which she had prompted him, and the issue of that errand she hoped would free her from all her present restraints and difficulties.

"If we succeed—and I am daring enough to make success certain, even if Bathurst is not," she thought, her eyes gleaming, her pretty face growing hideous under her evil thoughts, "there'll be no question of Sinda's coming here, or of Sinda's sharing my

fortune! Even a week may change the whole face of affairs, and make me my own mistress."

The letter which Lord Tregaron had written reached Sinda the next day—the day upon which Col. Darke made to her his proposal of marriage.

Upon the night of the day thereafter Sinda made her escape from Haigh Lodge as recorded.

Upon the morning after that escape, Wolsey Bathurst returned from London, ostensibly from Lostwithiel. It was nearly noon when he arrived, and Lord Tregaron and Maya were gone out to drive.

No opportunity was afforded Wolsey Bathurst and Maya for private speech when they met at a later hour that afternoon, the earl being present. It was not until after dinner, when the land-agent had called and was closeted in the library with the earl, that the pair were alone together.

"Let us go out on the terrace for a walk," said young Bathurst. "The evening is delightful."

Maya assented and rang for her opera-cloak. Then the young couple stepped out of a drawing-room window upon the terrace and strolled away together in the light of the slender crescent moon and the glimmering stars.

"Well?" said the girl, impatiently, when they were at a safe distance from the castle.

"Well!" declared the young man, with emphasis. "I did as you directed, Maya."

"And you got the drug?"

"Yes. I got it, with some difficulty, and I had to pay a precious high price for it, too. I didn't dare go to a regular chemist's, you knew, lest my name should be inquired after and other inquiries be made. I found a broken-down doctor I used to know, and he procured the thing for me."

"Give it to me!" cried Maya, eagerly.

Young Bathurst made a swift survey of the scene around him, and then took from his pocket a tiny phial filled with a white powder. Maya examined it and thrust it into her bosom.

"And now that I have obeyed you," said Bathurst, "tell me why you are so anxious to get the earl out of the way. That boarding-school idea is scarcely sufficient motive—"

"Perhaps not. But he intends now to adopt Sinda as his daughter and co-heiress with me!" cried the girl, sharply. "How do you like that?"

Bathurst started.

"What an idea!" he exclaimed. "He—he can't doubt Topes's confession—that you are the Lady Katherine Elliot."

It was Maya's turn to start.

"How could he doubt it?" she demanded angrily. "Do I not remember my childhood? Have I not my mother's jewels? The cause of his action is, that he has taken a fancy to Sinda and that, for some reason, he does not like me. It's the same old story—everybody always liked Sinda best!"

"If he wants to adopt Sinda and divide your fortune with her, the matter is serious," said Bathurst. "The girl will come, you may be sure. And you will be robbed and despised for a washerwoman's daughter—"

"Unless," interrupted Maya, significantly, and her hand flew to the phial she had placed in her bosom.

Young Bathurst gloomily nodded assent.

"It's a terrible thing to do," he muttered.

"You needn't do it. I'm brave enough to take the whole thing on myself," cried Maya. "If Sinda should not arrive until to-morrow night, she'll find her lordly friend dead—"

"But she'll be sure to come to-night! She has time—oh, look! There's a Lostwithiel fly coming up the avenue! Sinda has come!"

The two gazed at the vehicle moving over the bridge and in the direction of the castle. It was not Sinda's lovely face that looked out of the vehicle, however, and glared at the pair upon the terrace—it was the red and bleared visage of Mrs. Biggs!

CHAPTER LIII.

THOMAS BATHURST stood as if turned to stone, staring at his prostrate and insensible victim in a glare of absolute horror!

He believed that death had cheated him of his prey—that poor Agnes Elliot had gone from her earthly prison and his persecutions to the glorious freedom and perfect happiness of a world in which he could never reach her!

Recovering himself with a galvanic start, and uttering a yell of maniacal fury that rang through the rooms of the old house, he bounded to her, gathered her up in his arms and laid her upon the couch.

Then he took the lamp in his hand and surveyed her with a convulsed countenance and strange, wild eyes.

How white she was! How deathly still! The sweet eyes were closed, and the long lashes lay upon her cheeks. The mouth, tender still yet inexplicably sorrowful, was shut in a rigid line. The soft hair that once had glinted with golden lights and dusky shadows, was yet soft and abundant, but of a uniform grey tint, that contrasted singularly with the beauty of the face, which no suffering had been able to dim.

The figure was almost rigid in its attitude. She looked dead—yet a sudden tremulousness of the garments covering her breast told that her heart had not ceased its work—that life still lingered in its citadel.

Thomas Bathurst's own heart gave a wild leap as he noticed that sign of life.

He ran to the toilet-table and brought a pitcher of water and sprinkled her face.

He chafed her hands and loosened her gown at her throat in a very agony of love and grief.

Raising his eyes suddenly, he beheld his valet standing in the doorway, watching the scene with curious eyes.

"Bring a flask of brandy!" he commanded.

"And be quick about it!"

The valet hurried downstairs, returning with the required stimulant.

He made as if to pour a draught down the lady's throat, but his master waved him back. No hands but Bathurst's should touch her. And Bathurst, gently and tenderly as a mother caring for her little child, lifted the lovely grey head, and tried to force between the clenched white teeth a few drops of liquor. He succeeded in his effort, and laid her back upon the couch, as she drew a quivering, sobbing breath, and opened her eyes in wonder and affright.

He stepped back a few paces, motioning to his valet to go downstairs.

Mrs. Elliot's eyes roved in a wild glance about the room, and settled at last upon the face of her enemy. She shivered, and into the deep blue eyes came a look of terror and aversion that cut the villain to the soul.

"Agnes!" he said, softly, yet with agony in his tones; "how strangely you look at me! Agnes!"

Her glance remained fixed upon his visage, and now an expression of pitiful pleading mingled with the look of aversion.

"You know me, Agnes?" he questioned, eagerly and anxiously.

Mrs. Elliot moaned faintly.

Bathurst approached a step nearer to her.

"You seem so strange!" he exclaimed. "You look so ill, Agnes, and your eyes are so unnatural!"

"Stand back!" said Mrs. Elliot, in a hoarse whisper. "Do not come so near me. You poison the air! Where is Nugent? Send him to me at once. I want my husband!"

Bathurst recoiled swiftly. Her face was kindling with a fever flush. Her glances were growing wilder. He saw that her mind wandered—that she who had borne an imprisonment of thirteen years, one of them with ball and chain attached to her person—who had made a perilous flight over Indian hills and plains and rivers, and through jungles—who had made her way to England, and found a temporary freedom from his pursuit—that she had given way under this final blow, and was sick with fever—perhaps unto death.

She raised herself upon her elbow.

"Where is Nugent?" she repeated. "Where is little Kate?"

"Agnes, you know that they are dead!"

"Dead? Who is dead? Not Nugent? Why, he is somewhere about the bungalow. And little Kate is with her nurse under the banyan tree. Call Rannelee. I want my dear, old Rannelee."

She called in a clear, shrill voice the names of her husband and her child. Disappointed at receiving no answer, she called a little imperiously for Rannelee.

Bathurst spoke to her, and she answered him at random, yet it appeared that she knew him. She seemed to fancy herself at the bungalow in the Indian hill-region, taking up her life at the point of her previous terrible illness of thirteen years before. All the long years of imprisonment and suffering between appeared to have faded from her memory.

Bathurst, full of alarm, summoned back his valet.

"She is very ill, you see," he said, meeting him at the threshold, and gazing upon the excited,

fevered prisoner. "Delirious with fever. Why, she even calls me Nugent. Do you hear her?"

Mrs. Elliot was calling frantically for Nugent, her husband.

"She wants the heathen woman, sir," said the valet. "She needs a woman's care and nursing. If I am not mistaken this fever is no slight thing. There, sir; hear her call for Rannelee."

Bathurst listened. The condition of his prisoner appeared to him very alarming.

"She must have a woman to wait upon and nurse her," he asserted. "And, of course, there's no woman to be had so available as Rannelee. Besides, the Hindoo knows how to treat many diseases, and will serve as well as a physician. When the lady gets well it will be easy to separate them again. Go for Rannelee."

The valet hastened to descend the stairs to the cellar.

He lighted a lamp on his way, and produced a key, with which he unlocked the massive door of an ancient wine vault in the furthermost corner of the subterranean apartment.

Holding the light above his head, he flashed its rays into the damp and gloomy dungeon.

In a remote corner, upon a pile of straw, bound with ropes so that her movements were necessarily few and painful, crouched the Hindoo woman. She turned her face toward the door as it opened, and her eyes were burning with a fierce and gloomy fire, and her bronze complexion looked faded and pale, and her attitude was one of hopeless misery.

She did not speak. Evidently, she thought that the man had come with food.

But he approached her, and loosened her bonds so that she could walk, and then moved away, saying the one word:

"Come!"

She made no movement to follow him. She did not even stir.

"Come!" he repeated, impatiently. "Your mistress needs you!"

The woman leaped to her feet.

"My mistress!" she cried, her eyes blazing.

"Where is she?"

"In this house—upstairs!"

Rannelee searched the man's features with suspicious eyes.

She feared some new treachery. But what could be worse than this damp and horrible dungeon? What could be worse than this awful solitude. She had thought all night of her mistress; she had known that her own capture must be but a prelude to that of her mistress; and she did not wonder that her mistress was a prisoner in this house. She only wondered that Mrs. Elliot's remorseless enemy should allow her lady and herself to be re-united.

"I can't be worse off than I am now," she muttered. "Lead on!"

The valet went on, bearing the light.

The Hindoo woman, still partly fettered, toiled after him, up the stone stair to the kitchen, and thence to the upper floors. As they reached the second story, a high, shrill voice calling pitifully for "Nugent," came floating down to their ears. Rannelee heard it, recognised it, and dashing past her guide flew up the stairs like a mad creature and bounded into Mrs. Elliot's room.

The lady was sitting upright on her couch, raving in delirium. And Bathurst stood a few feet from her, anxious, frightened, and gloomy.

He welcomed Rannelee with a sigh of relief.

"Your mistress is ill," he said, briefly. "You understand fevers. I am sure that you can cure her."

The Hindoo paused and looked from Mrs. Elliot to her persecutor. The words she would have spoken were hushed upon her lips, as another cry came from her mistress. She flew towards her and caught her to her bosom, exclaiming:

"Go! Your presence makes her worse! Leave her to my care!"

"If you want anything you can knock upon the door," said Bathurst. "I shall just be outside."

He went out with his valet, and shut and locked the door behind him.

Rannelee embraced her mistress, who, without seeming to recognise her, yet clung to her. The Hindoo soothed her as tenderly as if she had been a baby. She removed the remainder of her own bonds and loosened the thick, grey hair of her mistress, and softly brushed it; she removed her garments and put upon her a white night-robe, and then taking her in her arms, carried her to the bed.

Removing the lamp to a distance, she knocked upon the door. Bathurst, haggard and troubled, opened it.

"I want cold water," said the woman, "and

lemons, and a few drugs. Let me have them at once."

She named the articles she required, and Bathurst despatched his valet for them, resuming his own watch outside the door.

Rannelee returned to her mistress with wet cloths to lay upon the hot forehead, and beat over her, muttering:

"Why should I try to save her life that her enemy may torture and distress her? Better that she should die now. She has had nothing but trouble for many years, but in the Heaven she has told me about, she would find her husband and child and be happy. Can I let her go to them? Ah! no, I am too selfish. I could not bear to see her lying here cold and stiff—to lose her! We might die together, for I cannot live without her—but yet, perhaps He she loves may let her escape out of her enemy's hands. Surely, after so much darkness there must be some brightness in store!"

The drugs were brought, and Rannelee administered them as seemed wise to her. But the fever rose to a greater height and burned more fiercely in Mrs. Elliot's veins; the mind wandered back to the days of her early married life, and she talked of "Nugent" and of "little Kate," now laughing, now moaning pitifully, and Rannelee's heart grew faint with despair. Her skill seemed weak and insufficient here.

The day passed slowly, without change for the better, and night came. The Hindoo woman watched nearly all the long hours through, ministering tenderly to her charge, but the fever did not abate.

Bathurst watched also outside the door, listening eagerly to Mrs. Elliot's ravings to catch the sound of his own name, but she did not utter it. His hollow eyes and haggard cheeks attested how great was his love and anxiety, how keen and intense his suffering.

Upon the third day, when Mrs. Elliot was raving in a frenzy that appalled those who listened to her, Bathurst came in and stood at her bedside.

"She is not getting better, Rannelee?" he said.

"Do you think she will die?"

"The great Vishnu alone knows," the Hindoo answered. "Rannelee's skill is no help. Rannelee can cure the simple fevers of the blood, but this is of the brain."

"We must have a physician. She must not—shall not—die!" cried Thomas Bathurst. "I will bring a physician to her, Rannelee, if you will give me your solemn oath not to make any appeal to him, nor to contradict what I shall tell him!"

"I promise!" declared the Hindoo, solemnly. "I will do anything if only she may be restored to health and reason."

Bathurst waited until evening. Then, sending for the cab he had before employed, he drove to the house of a celebrated physician, and obtained audience with him.

He told him that his wife, who had recently returned with him from India, was very ill of brain-fever, and solicited him to attend her. His cab was at the door, he said, and if the physician would accompany him it much valuable time would be saved.

Bathurst's appearance was that of a wealthy gentleman. He insisted upon bestowing a liberal fee in advance. The physician asked his address, Bathurst gave a false one. The house he had taken was in a disreputable quarter, and he dared not declare its locality.

His anxiety impressed the practitioner, who yielded to his entreaties, and went out with him to the cab.

"Home!" said Bathurst, briefly, as they entered the vehicle.

One blind was drawn up. The merchant sat by the open window, artfully letting loose one of the silk curtains, and kept up a stream of conversation, so engaging the attention of his companion that the latter paid no heed to the streets they traversed.

Before a gleam of suspicion could enter the mind of the physician that all was not right, the cab turned into the wretched street in which Bathurst lodged, and drew up before the gloomy dwelling he occupied. The night was dark, and there was no street-lamp in the vicinity. The physician mounted the steps, Bathurst opened the door with his latch-key, and led the way upstairs.

True to her promise, Rannelee said not a word to the practitioner concerning the identity or the troubles of her mistress. She replied to his questions succinctly and clearly, and he gave her directions and wrote his prescriptions, which he gave into Bathurst's hands. He looked very grave as he

turned from the bedside and followed his host down stairs. They came to a halt in the lower hall, and Bathurst said:

"Do you think she will die, doctor?"
"She had had some great strain upon her nervous system," said the physician, gravely. "Her mind has received a great shock, I should say, but she has been well treated so far, and I think you have reason to hope for her recovery."

Bathurst expressed his gratitude for this assurance, and the practitioner took his leave, departing in the cab in which he had come.

Nothing had been said concerning a second visit. And as during his homeward drive the doctor discovered that he had not been taken to the address the merchant had given him, he became sorely puzzled and uneasy.

He was set down in safety at his own door and then proceeded to interrogate the cabman, who cut short his inquiries by driving away abruptly, leaving his curiosity unsatisfied as to the locality and the people he had visited.

The affair took rank at once in the worthy physician's mind with mysterious tales he had heard in student days, and many were the fanciful theories he concocted in regard to the beautiful fevered lady and her sinister supposed husband and the grim Hindoo nurse.

Bathurst hastened to have the prescriptions made up at a chemist's and administered the medicine with his own hands.

But no instant change for the better occurred, as he had anticipated.

For a week or more Mrs. Elliot lay at the very gates of death, and Rannelee and Bathurst watched over her with a tireless devotion.

But at the end of the week the crisis was safely passed, the fever was broken up, and the invalid began slowly to recover.

At the end of the second week she had recovered a large portion of her strength—a fact which she and Rannelee carefully concealed from their enemy. They believed that the lady's recovery would be the signal for the servant's re-incarceration in the wine-vault, and Mrs. Elliot remained in bed during the brief visits of Bathurst, and did not permit him to know she was nearly well.

One afternoon, at an hour when her persecutor never visited her, Mrs. Elliot was seated in her easy chair.

Rannelee had brushed out her mistress's hair and thick, grey locks, lamenting over their loss of colour; Mrs. Elliot had been very thoughtful and silent, but now she said, suddenly:

"I am very much better. If Mr. Bathurst discovers how strong I am—and we cannot keep the fact from him much longer, Rannelee—he will send you back to your horrible dungeon, and resume his persecutions of me."

"Yes, missy," assented the Hindoo woman. "He has us in his net. He has only to tighten the cords at his pleasure."

"If we are ever to make an attempt at escape, we must do it now."

The servant was startled.

"But what can we do, missy?" she whispered. "There are no windows to this room. We can only get out at the doorway. There are two men in the house—you are still weak—it is impossible."

"I am too weak to attempt flight, true. But listen to me. I have formed a plan, Rannelee. I cannot escape, but you can do so."

"How?" asked the Hindoo, incredulously.

"We must contrive to have the valet sent out upon an errand," said Mrs. Elliot. "I will be in bed. You shall summon Mr. Bathurst by knocking at the door. Ask him to send for some drug or delicacy. Then ask him in to see me. He does not look the door when he comes in. You can fly down the stairs and escape from the house—"

"But he will kill you in his anger."

"He will not. He knows that you are a stranger in England—a stranger to English customs. He will think you too utterly insignificant to be feared. He will plan a defence in case he is molested by the police, but he will not be greatly troubled by your flight. You must learn the street and number of this house. You must not return to that horrible dungeon, Rannelee," she added. "You must escape and bring help to me!"

"I must go to the police then, missy?" said the Hindoo woman, thoughtfully.

"No. He might be beforehand with you and accuse you of crimes. He is rich and powerful. I have a better plan, Rannelee. Listen attentively. My husband, as you know, came of an influential family and has noble connections. I have been thinking very seriously of this matter during the past few days. Captain Elliot, my husband, had a handsome

property in England, and I am entitled to at least a support from it."

"But it must be in the hands of other heirs now, missy. You are believed to be dead, as well as your husband and child."

"I know. I shall need powerful aid if I obtain my rights," said Mrs. Elliot. "The head of the Elliot family is noble. He is a far-off cousin of my dear husband, and I am sure that he would befriend me for Nugent's sake. You shall go to him, Rannelee. You shall tell him my story, how I have been imprisoned for years in India by Mr. Bathurst, how I have been persecuted and wronged. Ask him to rescue me and to befriend me, to secure to me a portion of my husband's estates, and to free me from Bathurst's persecutions. Can you do this, Rannelee?"

"Yes, missy. But where shall I find this gentleman?"

The conversation was here interrupted by advancing footsteps.

(To be continued.)

THE CLARKSONS' BALL.

Mrs. ALISON sat in her low easy-chair, and tapped her foot impatiently as she sewed. Mr. Alison walked the floor uneasily and frowned darkly. It was evident that there was a storm brewing in the domestic atmosphere.

Indeed the first faint drops of the coming shower were already patterning down on the dainty dress which Mrs. Alison was embroidering for her baby.

"For pity's sake, Maud," broke forth her liego lord, "don't begin crying. Why can't you be sensible and look at the matter in a reasonable way? It ought not to be so hard for you to yield to my wishes when I have good reasons for asking you to do so?"

"I don't know what you call 'good reasons,'" sobbed Maud Alison. "You don't know the least thing against the Clarksons that you should wish me to refrain from attending their ball—such a magnificent affair as it's going to be, too."

"That is the chief of my reasons—because I don't know anything about the family—neither for nor against them. But the man's face is enough to condemn him. I wouldn't trust him an inch out of my sight."

"You're as unjust as can be," cried Mrs. Alison, indignantly, "to say such things about a stranger of whom you know nothing. I do believe you are jealous of him because he was so attentive to me at Mrs. Fitzgerald's party."

Mr. Alison whistled.

"Jealous! I should hope I wasn't quite so foolish. But I do think you are altogether too careless in taking up with people so rashly. You haven't known the family a month, yet Mrs. Clarkson is as much at home here as if the house belonged to her. I don't like it, and I expressly desire that you will see as little of either her or her husband as is possible until something more is known of both of them. Especially do I wish you to decline their invitation to this ball. I don't want my wife known as the chosen friend of a pair of adventurers."

Having delivered this, Mr. Alison walked out of the room.

Theretofore his pretty wife was justly indignant as well as at what he had said. Anger had dried the tears upon her cheeks as she muttered:

"Adventurers indeed! as if that were possible. I am sure Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson are as refined and elegant as any people of our acquaintance, and everybody says the ball will be magnificent; and everybody is going, too, and—and so am I. I will not be deprived of every little pleasure I chance to care for because Fred chooses to dictate in that lordly manner. I shall go to that ball in spite of him, so there!"

And the little foot came down with emphasis upon the soft carpet beneath it.

Now please don't rush to conclusions in haste, and decide forthwith that Mr. and Mrs. Alison were a disagreeable pair of people indeed, for I assure you they were nothing of the sort, as a general rule.

Please remember that the circumstances under which I have introduced them to your notice were extremely unfavourable to that display of angelic submission to each other's wishes which married people are supposed always to be capable of, no matter what the provocation to a contrary state of affairs may be.

It was strange that Mrs. Alison should have taken so strong a fancy to the Clarksons, a family who had come to Bassett quite unheralded, and of whom no one knew anything.

They had taken an elegantly furnished house on lease, engaged seats in the most fashionable church, and altogether had made a lavish display of wealth and importance—the lavish to be altogether in good taste.

When Mrs. Alison had met them first she had had her foolish little head quite turned by the gushing intimacy proffered by the woman and the flattering attentions of the man.

They were a handsome couple, it could not be denied. She was stately, tall, and stylish, was beautiful and debonair.

Still, she had a dashing way that was hardly refined, and he was almost coarse sometimes. But their apparent wealth might cover more heinous sins than these, and the society of Bassett had, almost universally, taken them up and fraternised with them immediately.

Some few prudent souls, like Mr. Alison, were disposed to stand aside, however, and wait for time to test the real value of these new-comers; but these were pronounced old-fogyish, and their opinions utterly routed.

Thus it was that Mr. and Mrs. Alison so nearly quarrelled that bright morning early in December. The Clarksons had issued cards for a grand reception and ball, to which nearly all the élite of the town had responded favourably.

Could Mrs. Alison decline. She did not intend to, at all events.

Yet it was with rather a failing heart that she perfumed her acceptance of the invitation, and completed her preparations for the great event.

She had never before in their pleasant married life acted so wilfully in opposition to her husband's wishes. But this time she felt herself in part excusable.

"If she had asked me not to go," she said, half penitently; "I might have thought better of it, but I won't be commanded. I didn't marry to become my husband's slave, and I'll go to this ball if only to show him that I can think for myself and act as I choose, whether he objects or not."

You see the little lady was fast working herself up to a high pitch of virtuous indignation, and she was scarcely disposed to pay any attention to the faint mimonitions of conscience, especially when it dared to whisper that she might be wrong.

The night of the ball came round at last, as all things do when patiently waited for. At breakfast that day Mrs. Alison announced to her husband her intention of attending the ball.

"Are you not in earnest?" he said.

"Indeed I am," was the defiant reply. "My preparations are all completed, and Mrs. Leighton has offered me a seat in her carriage in case you persist in not escorting me myself."

"I certainly shall not go," her husband answered, firmly. "I cannot believe my little wife will go without me," he added, pleasantly. "Give me a kiss, puss, and when I come home to-night I trust you will have put all this nonsense out of your head. By-bye."

But his wife would not look at him when he kissed her, and she stamped her foot angrily at the door closed behind him and she heard his careless whistle as he ran down the steps.

"I'm not a baby," she said to herself, "and I won't be treated like one. He shall find out that I can go without him."

He did arrive at a realising sense of the fact when he came home to tea that night.

Rushing lightly upstairs, the first sight that met his amazed eyes was his pretty wife in full festive robes.

She turned from the mirror as he came in, and leaned carelessly against the toilet table.

"Well, dear," she said, with a light affectation of unconsciousness that she was vexing him in the least. "You see I have decided to go, after all. How do you like my dress? I dressed early on purpose for you to see it."

Mr. Alison had stopped short as she spoke with hand uplifted.

"Maud," he said, in a vexed voice, "what does this mean?"

"Have you forgotten so soon?" she answered, lightly. "It is the Clarksons' ball, you know. I told you that Mrs. Leighton had offered to call for

me and bring me home again. Don't you remember?" he said, smiling and looking at her. "I remember something you seem to have forgotten," was the cold reply; "that is, that I did not and do not wish you to go to this ball. The Clarksons are not fit people for you to associate with; or that I am certain. The air is full of rumours against them, and I predict that you will find but few decent people there to-night."

"What nonsense you are talking," she said, genuinely surprised now. "Why, I know there are plenty of the best people going; I have scarcely met one who has declined the invitation."

"That may be," was the quiet reply, "but many men who have heard as much and more than I have will change their minds to-night and keep themselves and their families away. Those who do go will be very sorry for it, I am quite sure."

"What terrible things have you heard, I should like to know?" she asked, half-convinced.

"Only rumours, I own," he answered; "but they are bad enough. There was never so much smoke without a little fire, I——"

Mrs. Alison interrupted him with blazing eyes.

"Rumours, indeed. You need say no more. I do not believe one word of it all, and I shall go. That is decided."

"But, Maud——"

"I don't wish to hear any more. I am going."

She went—went with Mrs. Leighton when she called for her—went with a smiling face and an angry, rebellious heart.

The Clarksons greeted her with effusion. But there were very few of her friends present, and somehow the atmosphere seemed a different one from what she had been accustomed to. There were a number of strangers present—ladies and gentlemen.

The former did not impress her favourably, and the latter seemed rather demonstrative in their devotions to the fair sex.

Mr. Clarkson made her uncomfortable, moreover, by his persistent attentions, and altogether she was not sorry when Mrs. Leighton proposed returning home.

They went early, and most of their particular friends followed in their wake—those, at least, who had not gone before.

Very little conversation passed between Mr. and Mrs. Alison that night—very little for some days thereafter.

He considered himself justly aggrieved, and was indignant accordingly. She felt herself in the wrong, was too proud to own it, and was miserable in consequence.

Meanwhile, the whispers against the Clarksons increased in number and importance. It began to be generally conceded that there was something wrong about them, and people who had taken them on trust were gradually dropping their acquaintance.

Mrs. Alison, however, prided herself upon being no summer friend, and her intimacy with the Clarksons seemed in no wise diminished.

Seemed, I say, for she was growing to dislike them both as she saw more and more of them. Mrs. Clarkson's dashing ways seemed coarse now, and no words could tell how she was growing to loathe the man who grew bolder and more outspoken in his admiration of her each day.

But the end was very near. Mr. Alison came home to dinner one night in a half-subdued tremor of excitement. If there was a little thrill of triumph mixed with it who can blame him? Human nature is weak, and the best of us are very apt to exult in the downfall of our enemies, just at first before the Christian spirit has time to check the feeling.

"Maud, dear, I have news for you," he said, striving to speak calmly, but signally failing in the attempt.

Mrs. Alison looked up, a little surprised at the "dear," which had fallen from his lips but rarely since that unfortunate ball, but, truth to tell, she was rather glad to hear it again.

"What is it?"

"It's about the Clarksons. You see," he went on, hurriedly, "there's been, as you know, a great deal of talk about them lately—more perhaps than you are aware of—and people haven't scrupled to call them adventurers, if not swindlers. It seems they are even worse than that——"

"What?" cried Mrs. Alison, sharply.

"Criminals! At least the man is. He was arrested this morning by a detective from the city who

has been on his track for some time. His very boldness in coming here and launching out in the style he has, under an assumed name and with all the appearance of great wealth, had thrown the police off the scent for a little while. But they've got him now, and he's safe for a twenty years' term at least.

"What has he done?" asked Mrs. Alison, faintly, after a long pause.

"Perhaps you will recognise his real name—it is Willis——"

"The notorious bank robber?"

"The same."

Mrs. Alison did not speak for many minutes. Then she remembered that she had been—or had tried to be a friend to Mrs. Clarkson. She could not desert her now that so terrible a sorrow had fallen upon her.

"Will you ring the bell for Lucy?" she said to her husband, very quietly. "I want my honest and shawl. I am going to see Mrs. Clarkson. She ought not to be left to bear this trouble alone—and I know of no one who will go to her now."

Mr. Alison stared amazed. Even he had never realised half the real nobility that, despite her faults, was inherent in his wife's nature.

She had risen now and was standing, very pale and still, by the table. He went to her and put his arms around her and drew her head down to his breast.

"My noble Maud," was all he said. She clung to him, sobbing.

"Oh, Fred—you do forgive me for treating you so badly all these days?" she pleaded. "I am so sorry now."

"I need forgiveness too, darling," he answered, earnestly, "and we will both forget and forgive. Shall it not be so?"

She lifted her face and kissed him softly.

"Poor Mrs. Clarkson, Fred. Will you not go with me to see her? I do not like her really, though I have tried to, but I cannot leave her to bear this alone."

Mr. Alison held his wife in a close grasp.

"I have not told you all, dear," he said. "There is no Mrs. Clarkson—or Willis, as her name would be if she had any right to bear the name of the man who, if report says true, ruined himself and committed the robbery to gratify her extravagant demands."

"Fred!" Mrs. Alison's face grew pale, "you don't mean that she——"

"Was not only not his wife but a thoroughly bad woman to boot," he answered, sternly.

It was a severe lesson, and it is safe to say a thoroughly effectual one, not only to Mrs. Alison but to the people of Bassett, who had admitted these people into their society without question simply because of the lavish display of wealth they made.

Moreover, there are a very few differences of opinion between Mr. and Mrs. Alison now-days. She is more willing to take his opinion of people as a correct one, and he has learned his wife's heart too well not to trust her motives if he sometimes doubts her judgment.

F. M.

THE BRIGHTEST SIDE OF HUMANITY.

THESE are good men everywhere. There are men who are good for goodness' sake. In obscurity, in retirement, beneath the shadow of ten thousand dwellings, scarcely known to the world, and never asking to be known, there are good men; in adversity, in poverty, amid temptations, amid all the severity of earthly trials, there are good men whose lives shed brightness upon the dark clouds that surround them.

Be it true, if we must admit the sad truth, that many are wrong and persist in being wrong; that many are false to every holy trust, and faithless toward every holy affection; that many are estranged from infinite goodness; that many are coldly selfish, and meanly sensual—yes, cold and dead to everything that is not wrapped up in their own little earthly interest, or more darkly wrapped up in the veil of fleshly appetites.

Be it so; but we thank Him that it is not all that we are obliged to believe. No; there are true hearts amid the throng of the false and the faithless. There are warm and generous hearts, which the cold atmosphere of surrounding selfishness never chills; and eyes, unused to weep for personal sorrow, which often overflow with sympathy for the sorrows of others. Yes, there are good men and true men; we thank them; we bless them for what they are. Our

Lord, from on high, doth bless them, and He gives His angels charge to keep them; and nowhere in the holy record are these words more precious or strong than those in which it is written that He loveth these righteous ones. Such men are there. Let not their precious virtues be distrusted.

As surely and as evidently as some men have obeyed the calls of ambition and pleasure, so surely and so evidently have other men obeyed the voice of conscience, and "chosen rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Why, every mock man suffers in a conflict keener far than the contest for honour and applause. And there are such men, who, amid injury and insult, and misconstruction, and the pointed finger, and the scornful look of pride, stand firm in their integrity and allegiance to a loftier principle, and still their throbbing hearts in prayer, and hush them to the gentle motions of kindness and pity.

Such witnesses there are even in this bad world; such a redeeming work is going forward amid its mournful derelictions; proofs that it is not a world forsaken of Heaven; pledges that it will not be forsaken; tokens that cheer and touch every good and thoughtful mind, beyond all other power of earth to penetrate and enkindle it.

THE DESERTED WIVES.

In the small village of Athelton, that nestled at the foot of a northern mountain, there were two men who had deserted their wives—John Ford, and Newell Foster. And yet the village paper, the Weekly Enlightener, which paused in its glorious career of enlightening the darkness of the world, to condemn, as a righteous paper should, the crime of John Ford, in fact devoted a column and a half to a very large-voiced editorial denunciation of him, said not a word about Foster.

Sympathy without stint or measure, and a few pounds in money, were given to Mrs. Ford, but not a pitying glance was bent on Mrs. Foster. And yet I think her condition incomparably the worse of the two; for when John Ford deserted his wife he took his body along, while Foster left his at home for his wife to care for, to supply its needs, to be a constant anguish to her, reminding her every moment of the bright days before he had deserted her.

Some people have a wrong impression, I think, in regard to these things.

They think it is necessary for a man to run away in order to desert his wife. I do not.

Newell Foster had left his wife, just as truly as if he had betaken himself to Australia, or Ethiopia, or where not; and she was just as truly a forlorn, desolate, broken-hearted, woman, as if she were outwardly, as she was in the sight of Him, alone.

Mrs. Foster knew this. Ah, yes! Let her midnight tears bear witness to the truth.

John Ford and his wife had a terrible quarrel before he ran away: lawyers, and a few meddlesome neighbours helping the matter along.

Mr. Foster and his wife had had no quarrel. No officious friend had told Mrs. Foster that they "wouldn't stand it so," and "to stand up for her rights" for Mrs. Foster never complained; and as for rights, I don't think Mrs. Foster thought she had any, at least she did not, after she had been married a few years.

In the case of Ford, a woman was connected; a woman whose infidelity in the world seemed to be to prove how low a soul may plunge into the depths of degradation, and how many weak souls she can carry downward with her.

Newell Foster had been true to the letter of his marriage vows.

Since he had stood at the altar, ten years before, with the one woman he had chosen out of the world, he had "forfeited all other" as he promised then to do.

What then had brought this state of things to pass with Mr. and Mrs. Foster? Well, I think Foster was disappointed in his wife. He thought she was marrying an heiress; not that he married her entirely for her wealth: she had plenty of other attractions for him in these far-off days of their courtship.

But Mr. Foster was a shrewd, keen, business man, who looked out for the main chance; and it was unpleasant to him, to say the least, that his respected father-in-law failed, during the first year of their marriage: failed, and hid himself from his hungry creditors in the grave, leaving his only child no heritage but a dishonoured name. This was one thing. And, for another, she had borne him no children.



[PLAYMATES.]

And then she disappointed him in many ways. Her health was not good. She had been a very bright and blooming girl, when he married her; but ten years of married life with Newell Foster for a husband, had very thoroughly weeded the roses out of her cheeks, and the brightness and elasticity out of her spirits. She was now a pale, spiritless, household drudge, still worshipping, unhappily, the man who had taken her from her happy, girlhood home, and then deserted her.

It was this love that still remained so warm and true in her heart that made the very sting of her grief. If she could have been so indignant with him that she could have resented in spirit the constant slights he put upon her, the daily humiliation of his indifference, the harsh words and looks, the hardships of labour and endurance, she could have borne it better.

But she loved him, and love always makes a woman a slave. A slavery sweeter than freedom, as many a happy heart will testify, when the love is mutual, and tender, and generous. But in the case of Mrs. Foster, it was a failure so far as happiness was concerned.

Mrs. Ford's husband had left her with six little children, needy and destitute.

There were plenty among those who had known her in more prosperous days, to recommend the Orphan Asylum, or the poor house.

But there was one pale woman, who opened her arms, longing to clasp the weakest and youngest, and most helpless, in them.

Foster did not object when his wife proposed to adopt little Winnie Ford for their own child. Of course, his wife would take the care of it.

He would have a separate room during its baby-hood; he couldn't be disturbed.

But the child was sweet and wonderfully bright-looking.

She might grow up to be an honour to him, and he would never have any children of his own.

So little Winnie Ford Foster came to live with them, and the mother-love, that had never been satisfied, found expression.

No mother could be tenderer in care and watching to her own child, than was Mrs. Foster to the little Providence had thus given to her arms.

It was, perhaps, two years after this, for Winnie was a most beautiful and engaging child, just running around and beginning to say a few words, when Mr. Foster resolved to emigrate to California.

He thought he could do better there. Of course, his wife made no objections to anything he proposed; if she had, it would not have changed matters at all.

So one September day they set out, poor Mrs. Ford, who was having a hard time to keep her children's bodies and souls together, dropping many tears on Winnie's little fair face.

Arrived at their destination, Mr. Foster did well; he made more money in a year and a half than he had ever made in his life before. And, of course, he was not satisfied, and wanted to make more, so he bought a claim, hired a gang of miners, and proceeded to the distant canyon where his claim was situated.

Mrs. Foster was beginning to like the mild climate of San Francisco. She had formed some pleasant acquaintances amongst certain people, who, like them, had emigrated thither, and her comparative freedom from labour had given back to her a portion of her lost health. She dreaded inexpressibly the new wild home amongst the mountains: the lonely life, with only rough miners for associates; and the hard labour that must be her portion.

Mr. Foster was abundantly able to hire servants to do the cooking for his men, but I don't think the idea that he could do so had ever entered his brain. He was so accustomed to the services of his legally

bound hand-maiden, that, to do the man justice, I certainly do not think the thought occurred to him, that he could employ another to relieve her.

Early in May they were established in their new home, Mr. Foster's healthy, handsome countenance beaming with content, as he overlooked the labour of his men, for his venture was proving more successful than he had dared to hope for.

Mrs. Foster's face looked more faded and worn than ever, for she had no gratified ambition to inspire her.

Greater wealth would not affect any favourable change in her circumstances, judging from the past.

And poor, patient, weary eyes, looking into frying pan and gridiron, and sultry oven interiors, they had no time to look away from the poverty of her surroundings indoors, to the glory of the mountains, the glory of the forests, the glory of the waters; for it was on the bank of a rushing torrent that their shanty was situated.

The rough board walls of her cabin kept the glory and the sunshine from the tired eyes, as palace walls have sometimes done when sick hearts have languished within them.

But little Winnie was happy. Her child eyes, so new to all the world, found unending delight in all the wonderful, beautiful things about her.

She was the one ray of sunshine in Mrs. Foster's toilsome, loneless life.

Mr. Foster was proud of his "little daughter," as he called her, and thought of her.

Her exceeding beauty and intelligence gratified his ambition, and gave him hopes of a brilliant future for her.

And, to do him justice, he was a great lover of children, and the disappointment of not having any of his own had been very hard for him to bear. They all loved her, and, in fact, it would be very difficult to help loving little Winnie Foster.

Her face was sweet as an apple blossom; just such a healthy, cheerful beauty, too; none of your delicate, wax-like, hothouse blossoming in her round, rosy little face.

Her hair hung around her brow and cheeks like wavy masses of spun gold; and her eyes were like the blue gentians on the dear northern hill-sides that Mrs. Foster remembered so well.

All day long, that little golden head could be seen flitting about the cabin.

The miners grew to love it, hold it in a tender, sacred reverence, as they did the memories of their own little ones far away.

But, above all, there was one man amongst them, whose love for her knew no bounds.

This was a man, with wild, uncouth locks, and face nearly covered with a beard of patriarchal growth; his face was rendered more forbidden, too, by a long scar, newly healed, that cut across the forehead and one cheek.

This man, who had been hired by Mr. Foster after they had nearly reached their destination, was a stranger to all; but Mr. and Mrs. Foster were often puzzled by a curious resemblance, in the dark eyes, to some one they had once seen.

He was faithful to his work, and to his employer's interests; but he was not a favourite with the men. He was too reticent—surely, they called it; and as he seemed to wish to have nothing to do with them, they looked upon him with consequent distrust and dislike.

But Winnie loved him. His rough, scarred face was beautiful to her, for it always wore a smile for her. He was never too tired to tell her the long stories she demanded of him.

He gloried in the joyful ignominy of being her horse, her dog, her elephant, or whatever other animal her capricious fancy might dictate.

She rode in triumphant security on his shoulder, queenly mistress of these refractory animals, her capricious fancy might dictate.

She rode in triumphant security on his shoulder, queenly mistress of these refractory animals, her small, white hands clasped about his neck. To thus bear her up the hill to the cabin, prancing heavily, if he were a horse, or with long, unwieldy strides, if he were her camel, was to Jake Wilder sufficient reward for the labours of the day.

It was one lovely morning in August, that she appeared at his side, as he was rocking his rough cradle, seeking for golden reward.

"Dike, what e'o dooin'?"
He left off his work at once, to tell her what he was doing; told her with a kiss on the little, fresh, eager face.

He was glad to think of this afterward; glad to think that he stopped his work for a moment, wiped his hands on his coarse miner garb, and lifted her up in his brawny arms for one of the flying leaps through the air, that she relished so well.

He was obliged to go up the hill, then, to the

cabin, and she at once proposed that he should go as "her elfant."

He consented, with great readiness and delight, and placing her on his shoulder, he pranced solemnly up the hill, like a good-humoured elephant bearing a fairy princess, went in his best "elfant" tread, slower and more majestic than his gait when he was a horse.

At the cabin-door he sat her down with another kiss, and she looked up in his face with her trusting child-eyes, and patted his rough cheeks tenderly, and said :

"I love you, Dake; you're dood; you're my dood old Dake."

In a few minutes she was at her mother's side.

"What o' doonin', mamma?"

This was a great habit of the little maiden, asking everyone what they were doing.

Everything was so new to her; she had so many things to learn; people were doing such strange things all the time.

Everything was strange to her; she must be constantly asking, in order to find out things.

"What am I doing? I am working my life away; I am killing myself."

And poor, despairing, hard-worked Mrs. Foster dropped her rolling-pin in the bread-tray, and sunk down in a chair.

Mrs. Foster was not pale this morning; her cheeks were flushed with a deep red hue, and her eyes shone with a strange, unnatural brilliancy.

She had a terrible headache, was nervous, so she thought; all the morning her life, so tiresome, so bare, had been confronting her.

Her husband had been unusually cold and stern to her, too.

Winnie looked up into her mother's despairing, passion-worked face, with innocent, frightened eyes, and pretty soon her pretty lips began to quiver. Seeing this, Mrs. Foster caught her to her breast.

"Oh, my darling, if it were not for you, I would wish to die! Nobody loves me but you. Nobody would care if I did die. But you would miss me, wouldn't you, my precious?"

"Papa would cry, too," said little Winnie, with an effort at childish comfort.

"No, papa wouldn't care. Papa don't love me," cried the poor woman, bursting into tears, for she was unstrung by the near approach of the terrible sickness of which she was as yet unaware.

"Winnie loves mamma. Winnie will be dood dirl all day, two-four-nine days."

Had her scant knowledge of arithmetic enabled her promise to extend to a longer date, it would most assuredly have done so, so wrung and troubled was her childish heart at the unusual spectacle of her mother's tears.

Seeing the trouble on the baby face, and the grieved quiver in the childish voice, Mrs. Foster made a great effort to calm herself.

And soon the little cabin was as quiet, to outward appearance, as if no gust of stormy passion had so lately swept through it.

Mrs. Foster braced her fainting form to go on with her preparation for dinner; and Winnie, soon as light-hearted as before, flitted about as usual.

Mr. Foster was sitting on a bench, at some distance from the cabin, looking at some new specimens of ore one of his men had recently discovered. It was richer than had ever been taken before from his mines, and he was sitting, lost in golden visions, with his sombrero drawn down over his handsome, blonde face.

"What o' doonin' papa?"
So absorbed was Mr. Foster in his golden dreams, that, as he was sorry to remember afterward, he did not respond to her childish question, till after it was three or four times repeated, and then he bade her "run away, he was busy."

But little Winnie had something upon her mind, and was not to be put away.

"Papa, mamma is killing herself!"

"What is it?" This drew his attention very thoroughly. "What is it you say, child?"

"Mamma is killing herself, and she said you wouldn't care! She said you didn't love her; and then mamma cried, she did. Don't you love her, papa? She's a dood mamma, I fink."

"What do you mean by her killing herself?"

And then Winnie went on, with great minute-nos, to explain the rise and progress of the conversation.

"I said, 'mamma, what o' doonin?' Mamma said, 'I killing myself, working.'"

"Oh," cried Mr. Foster, with a relieved look. It was only a womanish, nervous complaining, that was all."

But little Winnie went on:

"That wasn't when she cried—when she said she killing herself! She said, you wouldn't care. She dead, then she cried, she did, awful hard, she cried,

she said you didn't love her. Don't you love her, papa?"

And little Winnie, who was constantly asking questions of everybody, and would, if possible, never give up her pursuit of knowledge, upon any subject, in her eagerness to discover the truth of this most singular assertion of her mother's, repeated the question, looking up into his face with innocent, wondering eyes.

"Don't you love her, papa, my dood mamma?"

"Love her? Of course. What a question. Run away, now; I am busy."

And he turned away once more to examine his golden treasure, and delight in it.

But somehow, after the little form had flitted away, as he had bidden it, he couldn't help letting his mind wander from the golden treasure in his hands to the words of the golden-haired little preacher, who had so lately spoken to him.

"Love his wife!"

The words had come glibly enough to his lips, when he was speaking to little Winnie.

Of course he loved her!

What a question? Wasn't the his wife—his lawful wife?

The idea of his love for her being called in question; he a church member; he who read the Bible every Sabbath, and who had always kept his heart from wandering after strange idols.

"Love his wife!"

What an idea!

But he couldn't quiet his conscience — his remorseful emotions, by thus braving it out. His conscience, that had been his servant, a careless servant too, sleeping at its post, woke up now, and was his master; a more relentless and inexorable master, because it had so long slumbered, and was now arisen, a king indeed.

In what way had he shown his love for her for years past?

Were frowns and indifference, and cold, harsh words the language of love?

Was it in that way he had won her from all other suitors, in the long forgotten spring-time of their lives?

That sweet girl-wife, so fair, so dear, so blooming.

"Her good mamma."

Yes, she had been a good mother to the child, a good wife to him.

Memories of her unselfish, patient devotion, her life given for him, rushed upon him like a wave—a wave, that long held back by icy barriers, rushes on more overwhelmingly, relentlessly.

There could not be a more complete abnegation of self, than had been here, all through their married life.

Her life had been given for his, as truly as if she had laid it down for his sake on some battle-field.

It was not an easy thing for him to stand thus, face to face, with conscience, with these remorseful memories, these new anguished thoughts of the patient love he had so long slighted. But he had made his home for her.

So he said to himself; he had supported her, fed and clothed her.

But this relentless conscience said to him, that he would have done all that for a servant, and never would have dared to treat a servant as he had her, knowing the servant would leave him if he did.

This legally-bound, patient thrall, he knew could never leave him, bound as she had been by her pride—he love for him.

But he had worked hard himself for their united interests; had been successful; and was it not for her as much as himself.

Was it? His conscience asked him now. Was it to gratify his ambitious desire to be a rich man, or was it to make his wife's life easier, happier, more perfect and complete, that he had striven?

Many, many questions did his conscience put to him, questions which he tried to evade, but could not.

But, above all, did his heart ache with the thought of the patient love, willing, year after year, for his comfort, yielding to his most unreasonable wishes, patient with his upbraiding, his coldness, his cruel words, and loving him—loving him through all.

The sun stole upwards and stood over his head, slowly, silently the shadow of the pine-tree crept toward the east.

He did not notice that the dinner-horn, which always sounded punctually at noon, had not been heard; did not notice how far the shadow of the pine-tree over his head was reaching eastwards.

He sat there, with his face in his hands, and his golden ore falling unnoticed in a glittering mass at his feet, till the loud sound of excited voices reached his ears, coming from the cabin.

He rose and followed the voices,

she said you didn't love her. Don't you love her, papa?"

And little Winnie, who was constantly asking questions of everybody, and would, if possible, never give up her pursuit of knowledge, upon any subject, in her eagerness to discover the truth of this most singular assertion of her mother's, repeated the question, looking up into his face with innocent, wondering eyes.

"Don't you love her, papa, my dood mamma?"

"Love her? Of course. What a question. Run away, now; I am busy."

And he turned away once more to examine his golden treasure, and delight in it.

Dead!

So they all called her.

Dead!

So the sorrow-stricken, conscience-smitten man, white to his bones, said, as he bent over her, calling her by the old loving names, that surely, if the spirit were still outside the heavenly gate, would waken her to blissful consciousness.

Dead!

And he could never tell his remorse—never, never beg upon his knees for her forgiveness.

But Mrs. Foster was not dead. Slowly did she come out of that terrible fainting fit, that was like the twin sister of death—came back out of the shadow of the Valley. Awoke to a stupor and delirium that left her mercifully unconscious of another grief that fell upon the sorely tried heart of her husband.

Winnie was gone!

It was some time before they thought of the child, so engrossed were they with the apparently dead woman.

It was Jake Wilder who thought of her first. He was the first man to go, although they rushed out at once to search for her.

Mr. Foster, although torn with anxiety about the child he loved so well, still stayed with his wife, of course.

A man was despatched for the nearest doctor, twenty miles away.

The rest all dispersed in different directions in search of Winnie.

At nightfall they came in despairing, went out again in the solemn darkness, their lanterns gleaming like fallen stars through the forest paths, and up the woody side of the canyon.

But it was near midnight when they came upon the first trace of her, a scrap of her white dress torn off by a thorny bush.

It was on the direct path that led to a precipitous bluff, hundreds of feet high, beneath which deep, muddy waters, whirled and edded.

Arrived here, one man, held by another strong hand, peered over the dizzy verge, holding his lantern so he could look downward.

It was no use, the man said, drawing back; no human power could reach her, if she had fallen down there.

Even as the man said this, a child's cry was borne faintly upward from the depths below.

They were brave men, bred to danger, and they would undoubtedly have faced death with coolness and bravery, but they trembled and turned pale before that first child-cry.

Again the man who had looked first, held by the same strong hand, peered downward over the straight rocky wall, and there he could just discover, far, far down, amidst a cluster of bushes and stunted trees that grew out of a cleft in the steep wall, a faint glimmer of white.

In falling over the cliff, midway to death, these bushes had caught the child, and had saved her.

"No! no human power could save her," so the man said, shuddering as he looked downward.

They only detained her for a moment at death's door.

At this moment Jake Wilder came up from his search in another direction.

"I will save her," he said, "or die with her!"

Life, to tell the truth, was not over sweet to Jake Wilder.

A hundred times during the past year had despair urged him to end it, throw it down as a miserable failure.

Now he would give it, give it for the sweet little Northern Blossom, the one being in the world whose innocent little heart loved him, trusted him.

In vain his rough mates endeavoured to dissuade him from his suicidal purpose, his vain attempt, for no one could save the child. No one, they declared; it was only throwing his life away, too.

He knew it would be impossible to reach the child by going downward—down that straight, steep, slippery wall.

His only hope lay in reaching her from beneath, working his way out over the whirling, mad waters, and then toiling up the steep precipice, a little less steep here, upward, toiling upward, with that little white form for an inspiration.

We read of men whose conversion to good is the

work of many years, toiling in their upward path toward good, helped by the inspiration of a purer soul, who leads them gently upward by her nobler example.

Learning, by the love and patience of a human soul above them, yet still beating for them, something of the divine love and patience that shines downward upon the weakest, lowliest toiler, who looks upward through these earthly mists, seeking the heavenly light.

And we read also of those whose soul's change is the work of a moment, wrought in some crisis, some great temptation resisted, some wonderful preservation, some despairing prayer, that Heaven has answered in the midst of deadly peril.

Who shall say that this rough miner's cry was not heard in Heaven?

His frenzied appeal, that perhaps he did not call a prayer; the wild cry for divine help, when his human strength was failing him?

The wild promise that if He would permit him to save the child, he would be a different man, a better man?

And in the night and the darkness, he worked on struggling upward, despairing, yet fainting not, for love of the little, fair soul above him.

Toiling slowly upward through the solemn shadows, near to the more solemn mystery of death, upheld by the divine inspiration of love.

It was a miracle! That was what his wondering companions called it; as he sat at the foot of the precipice, with Winnie's little form pressed to his heart, and the morning light faintly dawning in the east; the fresh pure light of another morning shining upon his uncovered brow, and his earnest eyes that were filled with a new purpose.

They called it a miracle, and talked loudly about it.

He said little. I have noticed that heroes are rarely garrulous concerning their heroic deeds.

As soon as he could walk, he bore Winnie back to the camp, disdaining any help in carrying her. He said little, but his rough cheek, wet with tears, lay upon Winnie's little fair face, the face of the child who loved him, trusted him; and as he bore her onward, he murmured often in her ear:

"My child, my own child, my little Northern Blossom."

Did this love and trust that he read in the pure little face, looking up into his so confidently, encourage him, reminding him of the greater love, the greater trust, that never tires, never wears, that yearns over the weakest and lowliest wanderer, longing to give him divine welcome home?

Mrs. Foster lay for many weeks, with death upon one side of her, and her husband's devoted, untiring love and care upon the other, uncertain to whom would be given the victory.

And, in those long, long hours of watching and waiting, he learned more of the heart-history of the patient, reticent woman, than he had ever known. Learned, through the wild delirium of the aching heart, that had carried its burden so silently and patiently; learned of the passionate love, that, like an eastern idolator, she had lavished upon her stone idol. It was not a stone idol now. No.

His heart was very human in its aching, its despair, its longing that she might live, so that he could redeem the past; could teach her what love was, what it was to be guarded and shielded by loving care; could teach it what it was to be treasured, beloved, precious to the heart, that had so long slighted her goodness, her long-suffering.

When the delirium of the fever left her, a pale shadow hovering upon the mysterious, intermediate realm between life and death, I think it was her husband's kisses upon her face, his loving words lavished so freely, that wrought the real miracle of restoration. Dr. Peacock thought it was his pills.

As for the man they called Jake Wilder, the change wrought in him, in that hour of peril and agony, was not evanescent. His said little, but his life spoke.

A weary woman in Atholton read of that change, in burdens lifted from her by a stronger hand, in letters doing her a tardy justice, in repentance, in promises of future well-doing. And so John Ford returned to his wife.

Newell Foster sold his claim with large profits, and built a splendid mansion in his native village of Atholton, in which his wife and beautiful daughter dwelt like princesses.

It was an elegant place, furnished as was no other house in the place.

Well-trained servants relieved Mrs. Foster of all the drudgery of domestic toil.

And people thought, as they looked in Mrs. Foster's happy, rosy face, that the content and happiness that was to be so plainly read there, was caused

by the beauty of her surroundings, and the ease of her life.

But she knew, in her heart, that the secret of her joy was not in these, although they were very pleasant; but in this, that her husband, who had deserted her, had returned to her.

In a hambler home, John Ford and his wife were practising the old lesson they had learned to learn once, to bear and forbear.

Mr. Foster helped John Ford to a business that enabled him to support his family in comfort.

And so John Ford returned to his wife, and was forgiven.

And the Weekly Enlightener made a good thing out of it, in the way of an editorial, warmly commending the repentance, and the forgiveness, in words nearly all of which were from three to four lines in length.

And Newell Foster returned to his wife also; and since He and His angels made note of it, I think it is of comparatively little moment, that the editor of the Weekly Enlightener did not record the fact in its columns.

M. H.

FACETIA.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

ECCENTRIC OLD GENTLEMAN (who has got into conversation with Stranger), waxing warm: "Do you know who I am, sir? My name is Simpson—Thomas Simpson, sir?"

STRANGER: "Dear me, how very fortunate! the very gentleman I wanted to see. Here is something for you."

Serves him with a writ. —Judy.

CRUELTY TO A CHILD.

SCENE.—A street near Drury Lane Theatre. Period, a fortnight before Christmas.

BENEVOLENT lady meets a small girl in deep grief and asks the cause.

SMALL GIRL: "Please, I wanted to be a fairy, and they made me an ugly toad!" —Judy.

AN impeccable man in Chicago announces his golden wedding will come off just twenty years hence, and that, seeing this is the centennial year, one will allow a liberal discount on any presents his friends design to make him then, if they will hand them in now.

A BLITZER heart makes a blooming visage. True, but it won't do to suppose that every blooming visage comes from a jolly condition of the heart. The cause sometimes lies deeper than that.

THE young man who flew into a passion has had his wings clipped.

THE man who ran his horse against time has been sued for damages.

THE man who was filled with emotion hadn't room for his dinner.

THE man who planted himself on his good intentions has not yet sprouted.

THE man who follows the sea thinks he shall get up with it one of these days.

THE lady who took everybody's eye, must have had quite a lot of them.

THE man who got intoxicated with delight, has been turned out of the temperance society.

THE man who minds his own business, was in the city a few days ago, but left, he felt so lone-some.

THE BEGGAR AND HIS DOG.

A BEGGAR, accompanied by his dog, stands at a Paris street corner. He displays a placard: "Have pity on the blind." He is caught attentively regarding a coin dropped into his cap.

"Ah! you can see then?"

"Yes."

"Why then the placard?"

"It is not for myself I beg; it is my dog who is blind."

WHEN the Marquis of Salisbury first went to Constantinople the Turks, believing he had come to deliver them from Muscovite scurvy, called him "Tchai supurgi"—the "new broom." Now that they find he echoes the sentiments of their enemies, they term him "Salt Bourou"—"only a trumpet." As for General Ignatieff, he is known as "Inad-Efendi" or the "obstinate gentleman."

POSITIVELY the very last appearance of the celebrated Conference troupe will take place on Monday next at Constantinople, upon which occasion, in addition to the comedy, a farce will be given called an ultimatum.

A DETROIT widow owns and occupies a cottage

under the shadow of a church steeple, which is supposed to be in danger of falling when a high wind blows. *Una mulier tunc dixit, hominem.*

At midnight, a few nights ago, when the wind blew fiercely, she got up her family and dressed them, and then folded her arms with the remark *videlicet videlicet*

"Now, then, if that steeple falls and kills us, people will know that we were a respectable family, anyhow. George, you brush up your hair little more, and Sarah, you take your feet off the stove-hearth and pin your collar more to the left."

A GENTLEMAN, says the "San Francisco News-letter," who is stopping at "Frisco," was, the other day, a victim of a fearful outrage. This gentleman, who is tall, commonly wears the highest collar ever seen in "Frisco." He received a note from a firm of billstickers, asking if he did not wish to let go the back of those articles for advertising.

AT a Texas baby show it was a long time before anyone could be found to act as judge. Finally five brave men were found to act, on condition that the awards should not be announced till the judges had ten minutes the start. The mothers sat in a circle, babies in lap. The judges made their rounds, compared notes, handed the result to the spokesman, and ran for their lives.

A CHURCHMAN said the other day that modern young ladies were daughters of Sheba and Ham—compounds of plain sewing and make believe.

WOMAN RIGHTS.

(SCOTCH lady, who has taken a house in the Highlands, her servants suddenly giving warning): "What's the reason of this? Have you not all you want—good rooms, good fresh air and food, and easy work?"

SPOKESMAN: "Yes, mem; but—but there's not a decent lad within cry o' us."

THE sexton of a parish church in County Armagh was about to lose his wife. She begged him to bury her in Tyrone, among her own kindred, forty miles away.

"Indeed, Peggy," said he, "I'll thry ye here first, but if ye give oy trouble, I'll take ye up and bury ye in Tyrone."

"Did you ever know of a crack that was too tight for a spying old woman to peep through, Tom?"

"Yes, John, the crack of a whip."

THE lady who had a "spark" in her eye has kindled a "match" without trouble.

THE boy who undertook to ride a horse-radish is now practising on a saddle of mutton.

THE lady who cut a gentleman on the street was observed to have a pen-knife in her hand.

THE barber who dressed the head of a barrel, has been engaged to curl the locks of a canal.

THE man who feathered his nest is supposed to have been a dealer in poultry.

THE individual who got up a sensation grew dizzy and tumbled down.

THE man who was brought up standing must have worn out many shoes and boots.

THE man who minds his business has a good, steady employment.

THE two neighbours who "fell out" have got in again. Neither of them were hurt.

THE man who took it easy was glad to return it in a hurry.

THE man who "held out an indenture" has had a sore arm ever since.

THE lady who was lost in a sweat has been found.

THE lady who knit her brows has commenced a pair of socks.

A TEA party without scandal is like a knife without a handle. Words without deeds are like the links without the seeds. Features without grace are like a cloak without a face. A land without the jaws is like a cat without her claws. Life without cheer is like a cellar without beer. A master without a cane is like a rider without a rein. Marriage without means is like a horse without his bridle. A man without a wife is like a fork without a knife. A quarrel without fighting is like thunder without lightning.

A FRENCH bachelor who is fond of children, declines to marry until he can be sure of crowding all the true happiness of married life into one week. His idea is to marry an heiress on Monday, have a son and heir on Tuesday, see him baptised on Wednesday, have his mother-in-law die on Thursday, take out letters of administration on Friday, bury the old lady on Saturday, and on Sunday take possession of the fortune.

THE man who carried out his moral resolutions did not bring them back again.

THE speaker who was "drawn out" measured eighteen inches more than before.

The man who reached the height of politeness has suddenly disappeared in a cloud.
The man who pegged-away returned home on foot.

A GROSS OUTRAGE ON A RESPECTABLE CHEMIST-MONGER.

HONEST TRADESMAN (very naturally indignant): "Sixteen a shillin' this time a year. Why, no respectable Hen could afford to do it at the price!" —Judy.

ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT.

It is rumoured that the United Kingdom Total Alliance are preparing a memorial for presentation to the Home Secretary. They think that if it were unlawful for any district to have so much "heavy wet" about without a license, it might do something to keep the floods away. —Judy.

THE JOKE OF THE WEEK.

THE BRAVO JURYMEN WHO THINK THEY WERE UNDERPAID. —Judy.

MAN: "Don't you come off, youngster! your giraffes are very slack!"

BOY: "Oh, all right! I shan't hurt! I've got firm hold of the mane in front, so I can't slip off behind; and I can't tumble off forwards, for I've a crupper on my pad. I'm all right!" —Fun.

AN "UP-AND-A-DOWNER."

BROWN: "And what do you think, Mr. Swellington, will be the upshot of this conference business, with such an obstinate lot on both sides?"

SWELLINGTON (evidently an authority): "Upshot, sir! up-and-down-shot, I think it should be called, considering the up-roar and the shooting-down likely to follow it." —Fun.

THEATRICAL.

CREDITOR (to theatrical manager): "I don't believe you ever met one of your bills in your life."

THEATRICAL MANAGER: "Wrong, my dear boy, I never go through the streets without meeting one." —Fun.

WELL, WELL!

THE WOMAN ABERNE who threw her daughter down a well has been respite. Perhaps Mr. Cross thought that from the Abernian point of view the best way to dispose of Aberne was to get rid of it at once, and be as near well as possible. If the woman didn't let well alone, we will, after that. —Fun.

LITTLE EMLY.

LOD EMLY in his recent speech at Limerick stated, "the waters of contention were subsiding." "Given way to the other waters," might have been the dry rejoinder. But it must be difficult to find even rejoinder dry this weather. —Fun.

AN ILLERÉAD REMARK.

THE "Stamboul," a Turkish newspaper, complains that some portions of the country are without bread because the bakers, frightened by the high price of flour, have fled. The Turks have an English Baker in Constantinople, but, alas, he is not a good bread man. —Fun.

WHY didn't the most recent ritualists keep their plots and practices dark, say at Deptford?—Because that wouldn't have been the way to Hatch'em. —Fun.

KISSING GOES BY CLASSES.

LADY (taking leave of her daughters): "Now, then, m'm, jump in if you goin'. This ain't a 'kissin' train! If you want to kiss, you must go by a Parliamentary!" —Punch.

COMPARISONS ARE ODOIOS.

THE MAJOR (rocking Nelly on his knee, for Aunt Mary's sake): "I suppose this is what you like, Nelly?"

NELLY: "Yes, it's very nice. But I rode on a real donkey yesterday—I mean one with four legs, you know!" —Punch.

TOO CANDID BY HALF.

VISITOR (to newly-married friend): "I was admiring your little carriage, Mrs. McLuckie, so—" —

MRS. McLUCKIE: "Oh, the brougham! Yes; you've no idea what a comfort I find it—" —

MR. McLUCKIE: "Oo ay! It's gay handy! We've just jobbit the cab-for the coors weather!" —Punch.

BROTHER MOODY is reported to have said, "Providence is rich and always pays high wages to labourers." Which may be true, and undoubtedly is if Brother Moody said it; but, judging from the earnest and frequent appeals made by said labourers, they find much difficulty in collecting it. —Punch.

STATISTICS.

THE grouse rental of Scotland was estimated some thirty years ago as being of the value of £70,000 per annum, but, if that sum was anything like correct at the period indicated, it would prove immensely under the mark at the present time, when the shooting and fishery rental of the county of Perth alone exceeds that amount by £10,000, not including the commercial fisheries of the River Tay. Perthshire contains about 400 shootings, varying in their rents, as assessed for the purposes of taxation, from £20 to £1,700 for the season. The shooting rental of Inverness-shire also amounts to a large sum, twenty-three of the shootings in that county being let for £7,466; and it would not be an exaggerated estimate if we computed the shooting and fishing rental of Inverness-shire at over £50,000. There are also numerous valuable shootings in Aberdeenshire and Argyleshire; the Earl of Dudley holds one in the latter county which is assessed on a rental of £4,520 a year, while Her Majesty the Queen pays for the shooting of Ballochbuie Forest, in Aberdeenshire, a sum of £1,500 annually, the rental of Glen-tanner and Inchmarnoch being £1,858. Three of the Forfarshire shootings are represented by £6,000, and a similar sum covers the rental of five of the shootings of Ross-shire, but it must be understood that some of the large rents include deer forests as well as grouse ground. The game rental of Sutherland, the county which gave rise to the great "men, sheep, and deer" controversy, is set down as being close on £13,000.

JOANNA.

You should have seen her as she stood,
A very giantess in height,
With brawny arms and frame of might,
The opposite of womanhood.

And as we climbed the mountain side,
She helped the little (?) maids ascend,
Much as a man his strength might lend,
And did it with a conscious pride.

Brimful of happiness and mirth,
We pitched our tent that summer's day
Upon the mount above the bay,
And seemed estranged from all the earth.

We talked of things both low and high,
The world beneath, the skies above,
And by-and-bye we touched on love—
(What maiden ever passed that by?)

While whispering each her own love plan,
As though the very trees could hear,
We spied a pearly, trickling tear
On good Joanna's cheek of tan.

Beneath the tear a blush was seen—
Oh, Cupid, with your heart of stone,
You could not even let alone
This manly maid of powerful mien.

We saw them after on the lon...
Joanna and her lover spy;
She towering up against the sky,
And he, poor soul, but four feet three.

A. K.

GEMS.

THERE is always more error in hatred than in love.

More are they that drift into evil, than deliberately steer towards it.

Politeness is not always a sign of wisdom; but the want of it always leaves room for a suspicion of folly.

In prosperity it is the easiest of all things to find a friend; in adversity it is of all things the most difficult.

A smile may be bright while the heart is sad. A rainbow is beautiful in the air, while beneath is the moaning sea.

Four things are grievously empty—a head without brains, a wit without judgment, a heart without honesty, and a purse without money.

He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven.

Those for the most part are the greatest thinkers who are the least talkers; as frogs cease to croak when light is brought to the water's edge.

Women are too apt to think that certain vices in a young man, like moles upon a fair skin, are beauty-spots.

Ingratitude is a crime so shameful, that the man was never found who would acknowledge himself guilty of it.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FRIED POTATOES.—Peel the potatoes carefully, dropping them into cold water as soon as peeled; then cut them either in slices, dice, or fillets, or out in round or oval pieces with a vegetable spoon or cutter, dropping the pieces in cold water also. When all are cut, have hot fat on the fire; take the potatoes from the water, shake them in a coarse and dry towel, and turn them in the pan of boiling fat. Stir now and then with a skimmer until done, then turn them into a colander; from the colander turn them into a clean coarse and dry towel, and shake them in it gently. Dust fine salt all over, and serve warm. The operation of turning into a colander, and from thence into a towel, and the salting and dishing, must be done quickly, to prevent the potatoes from getting cold. Thus done and served, they are dry, warm and crisp. If the potatoes are desired swollen, when they are nearly cooked, turn them into the colander; then put one or two pieces of wood over the fire, under the pan, to warm the fat a little more. As soon as the flame of the wood makes the fat throw off bubbles of smoke, put the potatoes back into it; stir gently with the skimmer for from half to one minute, then turn them again into the colander, and serve hot. They may also be shaken in a towel, to have the fat absorbed by it. They are also dusted with fine salt.

SLUMBERING PLANTS.—It is well known that plants sleep at night; but their hours of sleeping are a matter of habit, and may be disturbed artificially, just as a cock may be waked up to crow at untimely hours by the light of a lantern. A French chemist subjected a sensitive plant to an exceedingly trying course of discipline by completely changing its hours—exposing it to a bright light at night, so as to prevent sleep, and putting it in a dark room during the day. The plant appeared to be much disturbed and puzzled at first. It opened and closed its leaves regularly, sometimes nodding, in spite of the artificial sun that shed its beams at midnight, and sometimes waking up, from the force of habit, to find the chamber dark in spite of the time of day. Such are the trammels of use and wont. But, after an obvious struggle, the plant submitted to the change, and turned day into night, without any apparent ill effects.

FRIED CAKES.—Three eggs, one and a half cups buttermilk, one teaspoonful of soda; do not mix very stiff.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SALT.—In some parts of China, salt is valued very highly, and takes the place of money in mercantile transactions. In parts of Yung-nan, salt cakes are as much current coins as copper cash. The hill tribes attach great value to salt, and the chief aim of their constant raids on Chinese villages is to steal it. The Chinese in their turn use it as an instrument with which to plunder the hill tribes, who willingly exchange the commodities at their command, such as gold, musk and skins, at ruinous rates, for the coveted necessity. It is almost needless to say that being thus valuable, salt does not escape the notices of the mandarins, apart from the imperial tax upon it; but, as it is comparatively cheap, the official difficulties it has to struggle against in its production are not so great as those which surround the various processes connected with gold, silver and copper.

BIOLOGICAL FACT.—Man is the only animal that blows his nose. The alligator has a nose nearly two feet long, and he never blows it. The elephant can reach over his nose and tickle his hind legs, and he often does, but he never will, and the oyster, whose nose reaches clear round to his back, refrains from exercising it. Man alone has reached the height of a pocket-handkerchief, and he proudly waves his bandana as a sufficient evidence of his superiority.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JON.—1. Bay rum will not injure the skin. 2. There is no impropriety in your visiting your physician during his office hours.

ALICE.—Your lover's absence may be occasioned by illness. We should not recommend you to write to him unless you first receive some word from him.

BELLE.—If the young man has no home to offer you, and thinks that by waiting another year he will be in a position to marry, we think your parents should encourage you in waiting.

S. T.—You can with propriety wear the suit you mention in your letter. A white cravat and vest would improve your appearance and give to your toilet more of the full-dress style.

H.—The young lady being engaged should be sufficient reason why she should not answer letters addressed to her from any gentleman beside him to whom she is engaged. We think the young lady owes you an apology if the case is as you have stated in your letter.

H. P.—There are plenty of chemicals used for disinfectants, but we prefer ground coffee as being harmless and pleasant; it is the most powerful deodorizer in common use, and is excellent to place in an open dish in a sick room.

CLARA.—Of course, every young lady should learn to swim. It is easily learned, and only requires confidence. Women are physically as well qualified for swimming as men; their superior buoyancy makes up for their inferior strength of muscle.

J. B.—As to your being engaged to a young man you will perceive, upon reflection, that it is not a supposable case. But we can advise you, nevertheless. Just tell the young man confidentially what your own mother's views are, and see how they strike him.

MAT.—Your case confirms our view. We cannot suggest anything but a truthful, straightforward statement of facts, if a statement becomes necessary. All roundabout and scheming devices are seen through, ought to be resented, and are so commonly.

ALF.—Talk the matter over with the young ladies in your neighbourhood, to whom you can explain your situation more fully than to us, and ascertain their views on the particular point of inquiry which you make.

G. H.—You had better apply without any delay; telegraphy is taught and all the arrangements suited to such cases as yours. You will be told regarding time, and other points on which you desire information. Do not be disengaged. Ladies can make their way by intelligence, diligence, and ordinary energy.

ROSE.—Cremation is a very ancient idea, and has been practised in all ages and countries. The Digger Indians of California burn, with the body of the deceased, everything belonging to him—bows, arrows, ornaments, cooking utensils, and the like. Their "funerals" are wild carousals after their savage fashion.

E. P.—The edible birds'-nests are built by swallows peculiar to the East Indian Islands, and are much esteemed by the Chinese. In consistency they are not unlike isinglass. The birds'-nest pudding, so called on our hotel bills of fare, is a custard baked with whole apples.

NETTIE.—We agree with you; the gentleman would not visit you as often as he does unless he found your society agreeable. We should not endeavour to find out if he visits another lady were we in your position. If he wishes you to know he will tell you. Trust him, and let him see you have faith in his friendship. We know of no better way of gaining his confidence and love.

H. S.—Perhaps the best way of arriving at the knowledge is from some practical individual. We hope you may meet with it.

READY ON SATURDAY, Feb. 10, 1877,

No. 720, being the

VALENTINE NUMBER

of the

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Also the Continuation of the Stories from the previous week, Facts, Scraps, etc., etc.

24 Pages—One Penny.

MARIE and LOTTIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two tall, dark young gentlemen. Marie has brown hair, dark eyes, of medium height, of a loving disposition, and fond of home. Lottie has brown hair, hazel eyes, of medium height, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

Louis, twenty-four, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, respectable, would like to correspond with a young woman of from eighteen to twenty-two. Respondent must be thoroughly domesticated, and good-looking.

THE QUAKER MAIDEN.

With weary step I reached the door,
And begged a glass of water;
A shining cup, as silver bright
She brought, the Quaker's daughter.

A wondrous charm was in her eye,
And hair so smoothly banded,
Her lips seemed made for "thee" and "thou,"
And—kisses, to be candid!

There, morn and eve, for many a day,
While bird and bee sang gayly,
I rested at the door, and heard
Hoe "thee is welcome," daily.

So, day by day, I learned to know
And love the Quaker's daughter;
And she—oh, well! I think it's true
That Cupid's snare had caught her.

When summer days all sped away,
And back to toil called duty,
I went, but took to bless me still
My little Quaker beauty.

And now, though many years have passed,
And we are growing older,
The bright hair gray, our children tall,
Our hearts have not grown colder.

And now, as then, I ask of her
At morn a cup of water,
And give the kiss I dared not give
The Quaker's pretty daughter.

And still, when we sit alone,
Our hearts and hands united,
We use the sweet old "thee" and "thou,"
As when our love we plighted.

Her quiet heart my rest has been,
Her love my greatest blessing,
And we have walked thus far in life,
And love and peace possessing.

And so with all our toil and care,
Our lives with joy are laden;
And ever blast I hold the day
I found my Quaker maiden.

TOM, twenty, tall, light hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady of a very loving disposition.

Louis, eighteen, medium height, dark, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman between twenty and twenty-six.

Tim, twenty, considered good-looking, fair complexion, would like to exchange carte-de-visite with a handsome young lady about his own age and with view to matrimony.

Bianca, sixteen, medium height, fair, considered good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about eighteen, medium height, dark hair, and eyes, and good-looking.

JENNIE and E. L., two friends, ladies' maids, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Jennie is twenty-three, with golden hair, E. L. is twenty-four, medium height, auburn hair, and blue eyes. Both are considered good-looking, of a loving disposition, domesticated, and maternal.

ANNIE M. and M. L., two friends, ladies' maids, wish to correspond with two respectable young gentlemen, with a view to matrimony. Annie M. is of medium height, light brown hair, grey eyes, and considered good-looking. Thoroughly domesticated. M. L. has dark hair, hazel eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondents must be fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

OHELLO is responded to by—Desdemona, black hair, blue eyes, good-looking.

ROMEO by—Juliet, brown hair and eyes, medium height, considered good-looking.

MACBETH by—Lady Macbeth, fair, grey eyes, brown hair.

LAUGHING LIZZIE by—Happy Jack, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Would like to receive carte-de-visite.

ANNIE by—Tom, twenty-two. Thinks she is all he requires.

ARTHUR by—Louie, twenty-two, fair complexion, good-looking.

TOM by—Maggie, twenty-one, medium height, hazel eyes.

CHARA by—T. W., nineteen, tall, good-looking, would like to exchange carte-de-visite.

K. D. by—Gertie L., twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Thinks she is all he requires.

M. M. by—Mary, nineteen, brown eyes, and auburn hair.

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